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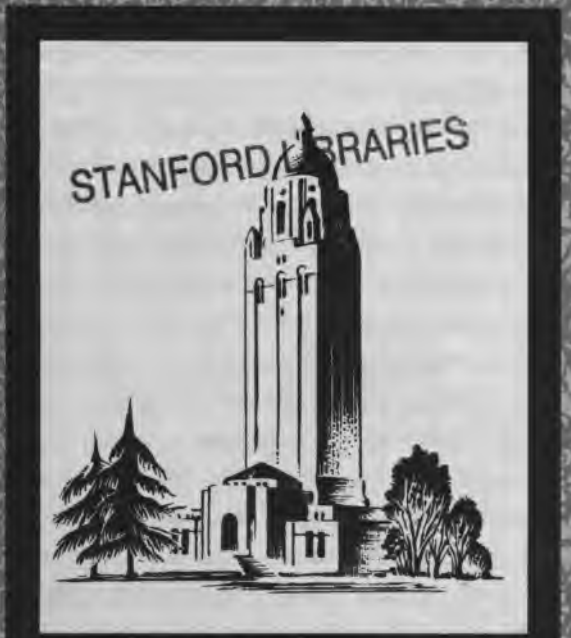
What I think of South Africa

Its People & Its Politics

Stuart C. Cumberland.



HOOVER INSTITUTION
on War, Revolution, and Peace

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WHAT I THINK OF SOUTH AFRICA

From a Photograph by
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WHAT I THINK OF

SOUTH AFRICA;

ITS PEOPLE AND ITS POLITICS

BY

STUART CUMBERLAND

AUTHOR OF "THE QUEEN'S HIGHWAY, FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN,"
"A THOUGHT-READER'S THOUGHTS," ETC.

WITH NUMEROUS ORIGINAL PORTRAITS AND MAP

LONDON: CHAPMAN & HALL, LD.

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TO

P. B.

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WHAT I THINK OF SOUTH AFRICA

CHAPTER I

WHICH IS INTRODUCTORY

FOR many years South Africa was the Cinderella of the Colonies. Whilst her more favoured sisters —Canada and Australia—with the kind assistance of their all-obliging parent Britannia, cut a fine figure in the eyes of the world, and consequently had many suitors of all ranks, and of all nationalities, poor South Africa crouched in the ashes, neglected and unloved.

Then a good fairy took pity on her, and showed her where the diamonds and gold, which all mankind coveted, lay hidden amongst the seemingly worthless sand and stones. From that moment her all-too-neglectful step-mother treated her with less indifference, and she, the once despised, eventually

found herself the object of considerable attention. From all parts of the world men came to woo her; but there has never been any pretence in the wooing. One and all have courted her for her great wealth—for what they could get out of her. The successful suitors in the main part love and ride away with their pockets bursting with the wealth she has lavished upon them, whilst the unsuccessful ones return to upbraid her or remain to deride her. The Princes Charming, with real love in their hearts and "settling down" thoughts in their minds, have been few and far between. So South Africa, although no longer the poor despised Cinderella of yore, remains almost as much unloved as ever. And yet there is much to love in her, just as there is not a little to condemn.

I, too, have been one of her suitors, and during the period in which I paid my visit last year, I had many opportunities of noting her virtues, and her faults. She has frequently expressed her opinion of me, and now comes my turn. I shall speak of her just as I found her, in public and in private, just, in fact, as she struck me. I may be wrong in some of my conclusions, but she will know that I have honestly arrived at them. Wherever I am wrong, my observation, my intelligence—or my

liver—must be blamed, and not my intention. My intention is good, if everything else be at fault.

I have in these pages no idea of going over the ground taken by those who have preceded me, or of anticipating those who may come after me. This is neither a history nor a guide-book, nor again is it a work dealing with adventure—it doesn't, in fact, contain even a lion story. It is simply a record of my own "thoughts," with here and there a bit of what I hope may be useful information thrown in.

Some may be interested to know what I think of South Africa, whilst to others it may be a matter of complete indifference. Some may agree with me and some disagree with me; but, be that as it may, the fact remains that concerning all matters dealt with herein, I have at least said exactly what I think, without fear and without favour.

CHAPTER II

WHAT I THINK OF CAPE TOWN

ONE'S first impression of Cape Town from the sea, on a dark winter's night, is not an altogether agreeable one. It seems wrapped in gloom, and Table Mountain, dark and frowning, has not a particularly hospitable look about it. The breakwater, principally the work of convicts, looms out black against the raging waters, and were it not for the few lights on the heights beyond, one might well imagine one had anchored in front of a city of the dead. With the morning come many signs of life; the harbour is alive with shipping, and there is considerable activity on the quay, but, beyond, the city itself lies wrapped in stillness. We landed in a rain-storm, with the icy winds chilling us to the bones.

Luckily there was no delay at the Custom House, where the officials are most courteous and obliging,

and the long drive up to our hotel—the International—commenced. It was not—and can never be in winter—a pleasant drive. The horses splashed heavily through the mud, and the wheels of the carriage bumped incessantly over various abominations left in the ruts. No one who has not visited Cape Town can imagine what the mud there is like; it is as thick as old-fashioned pea-soup, with a blood-red tinge in it. It makes the horses look as if they had been wading in gore, whilst the glue-like properties are the despair of those who try to brush your clothes after a good splashing.

The weather, however, eventually cleared up, and then I had my first experience of the delightful possibilities of the South African climate; and, in good weather, it is really delightful. It is in the wet season cold and damp, but in the summer there is always more or less a refreshing breeze. In fact an "airier" place, outside of St. Johns, Newfoundland, does not, I fancy, exist on the face of the globe. It has two nice winds—a sou'-wester and a sou'-easter. When either of them is in the full vigour of its unbridled passion it is a wind to be avoided. The sou'-wester is, I am inclined to think, the more boisterous of the two, and it takes a truly malicious delight in showing off its rude

powers upon poor defenceless humans. An ordinary rough wind is quite content with taking off one's hat and bowling it a few yards in the dust or mud, but a Cape sou'-wester not only takes off your hat and sends it flying hundreds of yards down the road, but it almost takes your hair off at the same time. The man who can catch up with a hat, with a good Cape sou'-wester after it, must have the speed of a Deerfoot; I have tried it myself and know what I am talking about.

But this is not all—by no means all—a Cape sou'-wester does and can do. It has a playful habit —at least I suppose it considers it playful—of wrenching off branches of trees at the very moment you are passing beneath them, and of whirling dust and small stones into your face with a force that both blinds and smothers you. No one, who can help it, goes out when a first-class sou'-wester has the running. It has a distinctly bad name, and one experience of it is quite enough to last an ordinary man for the rest of his days. It was my ill-luck to have more than this one experience, and I am grieved to say that on such occasions I frequently forgot my early Christian training.

But life is not all rain-storms, dust-raising, and hat-snatching in Cape Town, nor do these winds

always prevail there. They simply have their seasons, and, like all things sent by Dame Nature, their uses; and, as I have already said, the climate on the whole is a perfectly charming one. The sky is as clear as that of Egypt, the sea as blue as that of the Mediterranean, and the scenery round about as attractive as any you will find in the mother country. No city in the wide world has more picturesque suburbs than Cape Town; but of this later.

The town itself has about it an air of incompleteness; there are fine buildings and poor, mixed up in a somewhat disturbing fashion, and much of that in the way of street buildings which will eventually be finest is still in course of erection. Yet Cape Town has somehow or other quite the air of a capital about it; one sees it in its Government House, with the Tommies ever on guard, in its really fine Parliament buildings, and in the capitalish look of its inhabitants, as distinct from the never-to-be-mistaken provincial look. Capetonians dress well—about as well as people do in London—and just as Londoners are proud of being citizens of the largest city in the world, they, on their part, are equally proud of belonging to the capital of Cape Colony, and the oldest town in South Africa.

With most travellers it is the custom to disparage Cape Town, to vote it dull and its inhabitants slow. It is, it is true, not quite so lively as Johannesburg, and the people are not so go-ahead as the Johannesburgers; but it has not the same incentive to activity as has the Transvaal's "golden city," where the people are not only newer, but composed of entirely different elements to those which make up the population of Cape Town. But Cape Town grows upon one, and eventually gives a traveller, who has seen much, the feeling that it would not be at all a bad place to settle down in. How many Colonial towns give rise to a similar feeling?

The Capetonians are not so easy to know as, say, the Johannesburgers, but this comes of the greater age of Cape Town society, as compared with that of Johannesburg. For South Africa, society in Cape Town rests upon quite ancient foundations, and has consequently a good deal of the stiffness of age. Society there is very much in a family ring, and, unless you get inside the ring, you never know what Cape Town society is really like. The trail of the Dutchman is everywhere visible in Cape Town, and this accounts for some of its so-called slowness and its somewhat depressing straight-lacedness. The purely Dutch element is very old-fashioned in

its habits, customs, and ways of thinking; its people live very much as their ancestors lived, and they never bother their heads about new theories of the "house beautiful," or the new social problems which vex society at home. They probably have never even heard of the æsthetic poet or the New Woman, which after all is no great misfortune. They are kindly and hospitable in a way, but it is a kindliness mixed with caution, and a hospitality tempered by reserve and not a little economy. If this old-fashioned reserve be a little chilling, and their narrowness of vision a trifle tiresome, yet there is much to admire in their solidity of character and tenacity of purpose.

I have said that the trail of the Dutch is over all society in Cape Town; but, as the years go by, the trail will grow fainter and fainter, and with, as in the end it must be, the absolute dominance of the Britisher, one will eventually have to search with a microscope to discover where the Dutch of the present comes in. The fusion of the races goes on apace, and the Dutch, who don't fuse, run the risk of being squeezed closer and closer to the wall, and, in the end, of dying out. This particularly applies to Cape Town, and has, of course, no reference to the rural districts, where the Dutch element for

many a year to come will run its slow, undiluted course.

The population of Cape Town is very cosmopolitan. There are the pure Dutch, the Dutch-cum-Huguenot, the Dutch and British mixture, the pure British, the German, the Malays, and the Cape "boys." It would be almost impossible to tell what the Cape "boy" is made of. He has a little of everything and not much of anything. In the dim ages of the past he probably had a Hottentot ancestor; then came a mixture with the Kaffir, to be later on dashed with the blood of the white man, finally mingling with that of the Malay. He belongs to what are called the dirty-coloured races. He is neither black, nor brown, nor even a fairly decent mud colour. He looks dirty—and *is* dirty. He has no virtues to speak of, but many vices of which to complain. He hates work, but has a passionate fancy for the result of other men's labours. He calls himself a Christian, but is anything but a credit to Christianity. His moral character is bad, and his physique insignificant. He may have his uses in the world, but they have, I fancy, yet to be discovered. Up till now he has been chiefly occupied in providing convict labour for the breakwater.

The Malays, especially the women, are about the most industrious of the coloured portion of the Cape Town population. Most of the washing is done by the Malay women; they make but indifferent washerwomen, but admirable thieves. No one knows better than a Malay washerwoman the difference between superfine and ordinary linen; the latter invariably arrives home very much the worse for the washing, but the former more frequently than not remains with her. The Malay washerwoman who returns a silk handkerchief above the value of a shilling must, for some unaccountable reason, have made a sudden vow to steal no more, or, what is still more likely, have placed it in the bundle in error. The Malays love finery, and it not infrequently happens that one meets them at their Sunday outings decked out in some silken article which has been missing at the wash. The Malay has all the cunning of the heathen Chinee, and it is an old dodge of hers to alter the number of the articles on the washing-list and go to the hotel and get payment for the articles returned, leaving it for you to discover, on going over the list, that the number has been altered, and that you are several things short. The Malay washerwoman may not do this with her

regular customers, but she makes a business of it with the casuals, and, what is more, swears by all the gods in the universe that she only received the articles she condescends to return. To those who visit Cape Town I say: Beware of the Malay washerwoman; she is an irredeemably bad lot. I have suffered from her myself.

Another person to beware of is the Malay cab-driver; he has about as much idea of driving as a sailor, and it would be well to insure your life before placing yourself in his hands. I have suffered from him, too.

The way in which the dirty-coloured people jostle the white man on the pavements in Cape Town is simply disgusting. A black man is a black man, and a dirty-coloured man is a dirty-coloured man, but I have never yet succeeded in looking upon him as a brother. I object to knocking against him, and I resent his knocking against me. He is not savoury, and too close a contact with him offends my olfactory nerves. Let those who, being imbued with the man-and-brother theory, like mixing up with dirty-coloured people please themselves; it is purely a matter of taste. They manage things in this direction much better in the Transvaal and in Natal, and I

really fail to understand why Cape Town puts up with it.

The principal things to see in Cape Town itself are the Houses of Parliament, which cost £220,000 to build; the Museum; the Dutch Reformed Church, which was commenced in 1699, but of which nothing of the original building except the clock-tower remains; the Botanical Gardens and Government Avenue, which contains trees upwards of two hundred years old, and is an avenue of which many an English city would be proud.

The chief attractions are not in the town, but outside of it. In driving through Woodstock, Rondebosch, Claremont, and Wynburg one could well imagine oneself to be in a picturesque portion of Europe: there is nothing about the surroundings to give the idea that one is really in South Africa.

The old Dutch settlers had something artistic in their natures; they loved to plant trees and lay out gardens, as well as build houses that were at once substantial and quaint. They brought with them an old-world touch, direct evidence of which is in the surroundings of Cape Town to this day. All about Wynburg one comes across bits of Holland, but it is the Holland of a couple of centuries ago.

One of the most interesting specimens of Dutch architecture, of the days gone by, is the house at Constantia. It was originally the country residence of Governor Simon Van der Stel, who succeeded Governor Bax in 1678, and in its main features has been altered but slightly from the date of its erection over two hundred years ago. It was Van der Stel —a most energetic man—who made vine-culture a special study, and at Constantia the vine, which had been introduced into the colony as early as 1653, was extensively cultivated. As Constantia, which produced the famous dessert wine of the same name, was the Government wine-farm of the past, so it is to-day, the Government having recently acquired it for that purpose. The art of making Constantia wine as of old has been lost, but experiments are being made with the object of improving its present quality.

Van der Stel was a large slave-owner on his own account, and the cellars beneath the house where he used to keep his human chattels are still in existence; nay more, they are occupied by much the same class of labour that did the work when he reigned supreme at the Cape—viz. by convicts. Thus does history repeat itself even with the subject blacks.

Van der Stel was, for a Dutchman of his time, a man of luxurious habits; this is instanced in the style in which he lived. In the gardens, some distance from the house, he had a bath let into the earth, which was fed from a small stream; there is the bath just as it was in his time, but there is no one to use it, and the stream is diverted for the purpose of irrigation. It must have been a diverting sight to have seen the venerable Governor disporting himself in his morning tub (which is as big as a modern London swimming-bath), with nothing but the blue sky above him. Bathing with him must have been a labour of love, for, apart from the distance he had to travel from his home to get to the bath, it must have been pretty cold work in the winter, and in summer the mosquitoes would, all out in the open plantation as the bath was, certainly have been somewhat troublesome.

Van der Stel has gone to his fathers, but, after a couple of centuries, the good work he commenced remains to bear witness to the value of his labours. There are the vineyards, the house he dwelt in, the outhouses he made the wine in — nothing has changed much since his time, except that there

are new wine-presses and new vats, which modern improvements in the art of making and storing wine have necessitated.

Of course the visitor must "do" Table Mountain, only care should be taken to do it when there is no sou'-easter blowing; at such a time the ascent is rendered really perilous, for the clouds arise with startling rapidity, and for the novice to find his way, enveloped in mist, is absolutely impossible. In fine weather the ascent is well worth making, for the view of the sea and wooded land is unequalled anywhere in South Africa. It also goes without saying that the visitor who has time trains it to Simonstown and to the quaint old town of Stellenbosch. Houts Bay should also be done, and the shorter drive round Lions Head is well worth the carriage hire.

Altogether, the suburbs of Cape Town have many charms, and it is difficult to exhaust them.

From Cape Town you can get to any part of South Africa. Below I give the chief towns, and the distance of each from Cape Town. The accompanying map will show you how to get at them.

	Population about	Distance.
KIMBERLEY (Cape Colony)	28,000 ...	... 647 miles.
PORT ELIZABETH (Cape Colony) ...	23,000	by sea 428 ,, by rail 839 ,,
EAST LONDON (Cape Colony)	8,000	by sea 559 ,, by rail 900 ,,
KING WILLIAM'S TOWN (Cape Colony)	7,000 ...	... 879 ,,
BLOEMFONTEIN (Orange Free State) ...	5,000 ...	... 749 ,,
JOHANNESBURG (South African Republic)	40,000 ...	... 1014 ,,
PRETORIA (South African Republic) ...	12,000 ...	... 1040 ,,
DURBAN (Natal)	8,000 ...	by sea 812 ,,
PIETERMARITZBURG (Natal)	17,000 ...	... 872 ,,
VRYBURG (capital of Bechuanaland) ...	5,000 ...	... 774 ,,
FORT SALISBURY (Mashonaland) ...		(*viâ* Vryburg) 1694 ,,
BULUWAYO (Matabeleland)	2,000	(*viâ* Vryburg) 1300 ,,

Mr. Cecil Rhodes at Home.

and excites the anger of the "Little Englander," has a fascination for the majority of the British race. It has certainly fascinated me from the first, and a personal knowledge of the man has but added to that fascination. To know the real greatness of Mr. Rhodes' ideas, the full extent of their practicability, and the actual greatness of the man himself, one must hear his story from his own lips. I have sat at his feet, or more correctly speaking by his side, and listened, and profited.

It goes without saying that in this chapter I shall make a goodly number of enemies, for with the "Little Cape Colonist," who has much in common with the "Little Englander" and the Boer of the professional politician type, to be an admirer of Mr. Rhodes and his policy is to become an object of virulent abuse. I have already had considerable experience of it. But I do not write to please "Little Cape Colonists" and the unspeakable Boer politician, and any dislike they may have for me will leave me absolutely calm. I shall speak of Mr. Rhodes as I know him, as I read him, and I have had ample opportunity of both knowing and reading him

What most struck me about Mr. Rhodes at our first meeting was his shyness—it was so unex-

pected. I had, from the knowledge of his power of dominating men, of his masterful way of dealing with gigantic affairs, expected to find a man self-possessed almost unto aggressiveness, but his quiet, shy, retiring manner took me quite by surprise. This, I understand, is always his way with new men with whom he is brought directly in contact; he is seldom quite at home with a man until he knows him well. But it does not take Mr. Rhodes long to know a man. He is a remarkably shrewd reader of character, and not a little of his success is due to this natural shrewdness. On the other hand, Mr. Rhodes is by no means an easy man to read; that sphinx-like smile of his, when the knowing ones try to get at him, is most disconcerting. He reads you, in fact, much more easily than you can read him, and this goes a long way to account for the absolute confidence he has in those placed in positions of trust about him, and for the few mistakes he makes in his estimate of those with whom he is connected in business or politics. He is a man quick in his likes and dislikes, but again and again has his analysis of this or that person's character, totally opposed though it frequently has been to the opinions formed by his intimate friends, turned out to be correct. Expert-

ence has taught those intimately associated with him to have absolute faith in his judgment. In the old Kimberley days he was, as a young man, remarkable for the way he influenced those with whom he was brought in contact; and the far-sightedness which now distinguishes him was also remarked, although at that time he was set down as a dreamer of idle dreams. Mr. Rhodes, it is true, is a dreamer, but he dreams with his eyes wide open; his thoughts seldom seem to be in the present, but invariably in the beyond. In the midst of an animated conversation his eyes will suddenly wander from yours and fix themselves upon space. In that moment what is he thinking of? Of his future plans? of a consolidated South Africa? of—— Well, who can tell?

In addition to his mental restlessness, Mr. Rhodes has developed a certain physical restlessness, which, like that of Mr. Gladstone, is most marked when he is listening to the criticisms of his political opponents. His impatience in the House under what he considers—and often justly so—irrelevant criticism must strike the most casual observer. His mental activity betrays itself in the nervous movements of his body; and the desire to be up and doing, to give on the spur of the

moment the lie direct, as it were, to those who oppose him, instead of waiting till the constitutional opportunity offers itself, is, it is evident to every one, with the greatest difficulty kept under control. It is this general impatience of what he considers the carping opinions of others that has made men in the opposite political camp decry him as an autocrat. True it is that Mr. Rhodes is in a measure an autocrat, but his autocracy is tempered with statesmanlike wisdom. He knows what he wants, and he means to have it, opposition or no opposition; and those who fail to see as far as he does, thinking his views alike arbitrary and premature, resent the grip of his iron hand, which seeks to mould them to his will before they have really grasped what the result of his policy may be.

Mr. Rhodes as a politician is rare in this age of universal trimming. There is nothing flabby about him; there is no pandering to the mob, no truckling to this or that section, but all along he is guided by fixed principles, by the dominant idea that the policy he has determined upon is the correct one. At times, however, he puts on the silken glove but the better to conceal the hand of iron, and thus he draws towards him, and eventu-

ally uses them, those who otherwise might be opposed to him. In South Africa, especially in Cape Colony, the white population is divided, not equally by any means, into those who believe in Rhodes and those who don't. The greater portion are Rhodeites; they believe he can do no wrong, and that everything he takes in hand must come right in the end. On the other side, there are those who look upon Mr. Rhodes as a visionary, practical only where his self-aggrandisement is concerned. This camp is mostly composed of those who have not followed Mr. Rhodes' forward policy, and who have not consequently pecuniarily benefited by it. In South Africa there is a class who only believe in a man and his policy when they can make something out of him or it.

The curs snarl at the heels of the mastiff from very envy of his superior size, and the human mosquitoes buzz irritatingly around the man who has done something beyond his fellows from reasons very much akin to those which dictate the attitude of the curs. Mr. Cecil Rhodes, as a matter of course, has his full share of these human mosquitoes. There is nothing that ignorance or envy can suggest that is not suggested by them. In their opinion—and they do not hesitate at expressing

their opinion with superfluous maliciousness—Mr. Rhodes is all for himself. They affect to utterly discredit his Imperialistic ideas, which they assert serve as a blind to his real aims, which again, according to them, are the gratification of his personal vanity and the amassing of a colossal fortune. How little they know the man!

It is well known that if we had beaten the Boers in 1881, instead of their shamefully beating us, they would have trekked into Matabeleland and Mashonaland, and what is now the rich Transvaal Republic would have been British territory. Had Mr. Cecil Rhodes been to the front then, there would not, I fancy, have been any Convention signed, and the arrogant Boer would not be where he now is, and what he now is.

It goes without saying that had it not been for the foresight and statesmanlike grasp of Mr. Rhodes, both Mashonaland and Matabeleland would, in due course, have been overrun by the filibustering Boers, and also lost to us. That vast territory, with its possibilities for the colonizing Britisher, has been saved us. Years ago Mr. Rhodes had dreams about the land beyond the Limpopo, but they remained dreams; the time had not arrived when he could give them practical

shape. Then came the psychological moment, and he was, as the world knows, equal to it, and Rhodesia is the result.

Mr. Rhodes' enemies assert that he has the ambition that maddens and destroys. He is ambitious beyond his fellows, but his ambition is tempered with so much practicability that it is not of the kind that o'erleaps itself.

Mr. Rhodes is an exceedingly hard-working man—about, I should say, the most hard-working in South Africa. He is a veritable glutton for work, and it is a marvel that he does not occasionally break down from sheer mental exhaustion. His superabundance of nervous energy carries him on where many a man would collapse. He, especially during the Parliamentary session, has hardly a spare moment, and is consequently a difficult man to get at.

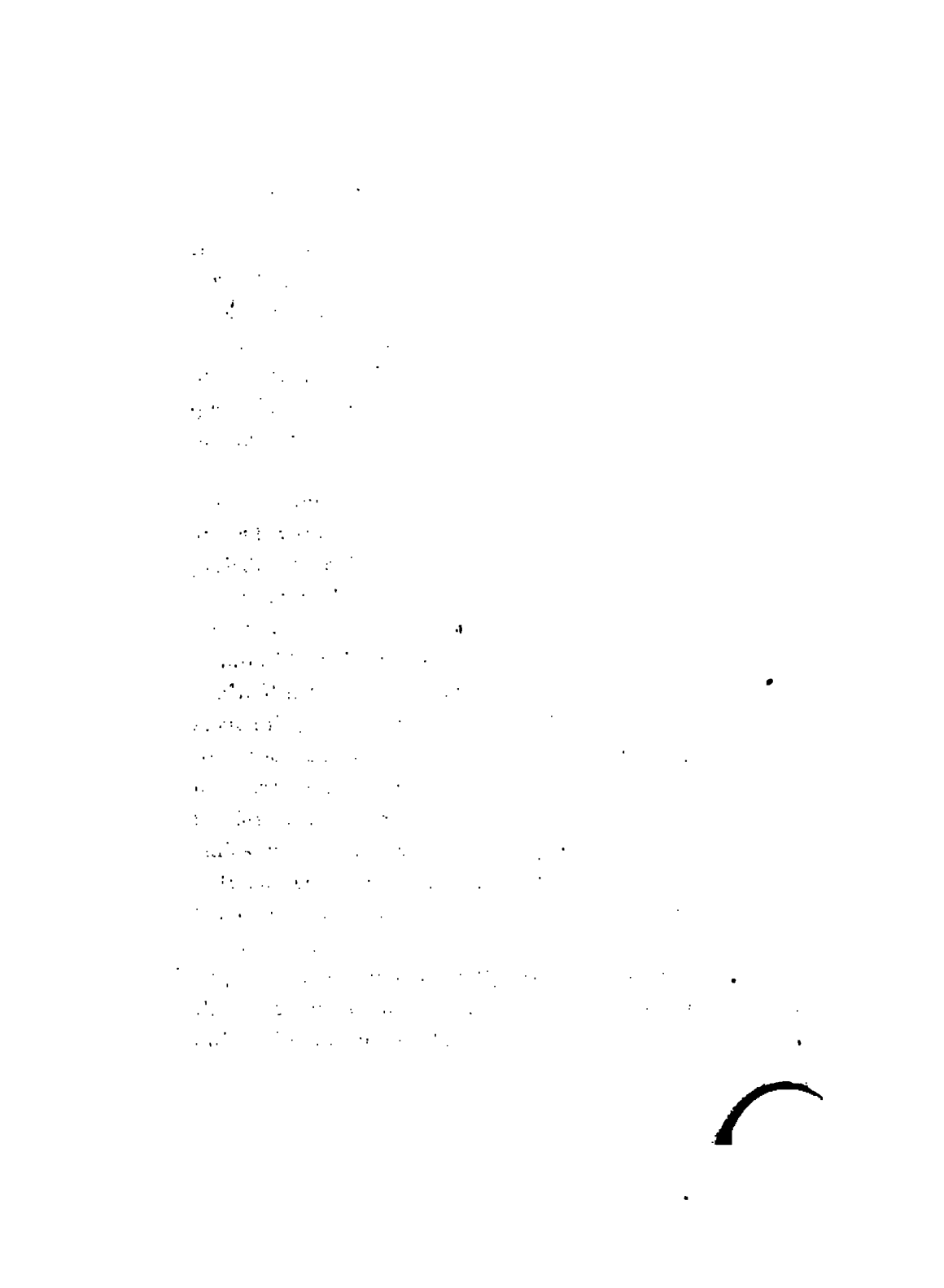
He is an early riser, and invariably arrives at his office, one of a series of official rabbit-holes burrowed beneath Parliament House, before ten o'clock, and there he works and receives deputations and visits from his colleagues until he takes his seat in the House. On the House rising he drives down to his country residence, the Grange at Rondebosch, where every day an extensive

correspondence awaits his personal attention. In town he very seldom dines.

Mr. Rhodes, the Prime Minister, at his office in Cape Town is quite another man from Mr. Rhodes at Rondebosch. In Cape Town he is always too busy, too closely occupied with State and other public affairs, to be able to give much more than the ordinary "Yes" or "No" to questions that may be put to him. But at Rondebosch you have the man minus the cloak of Premiership and the trappings of director of vast public companies. There, in his own house, you have a perfect host, a brilliant conversationalist, and an admirable listener—the man, in fact, you wish to study.

Mr. Rhodes' Rondebosch residence was originally an old Dutch farmhouse, full of an old-world quaintness; from time to time he has added to it, but the Dutch style of architecture is maintained in all the additions and improvements. The entrance hall is an entrance hall of the past, and so is the impressive oak staircase. Scattered about the house are interesting old-fashioned articles of furniture, and in the reception-room is a glass case crammed full of interesting curios, whilst from the walls hang British, Dutch, and Portuguese flags, each with a history, and old-

Mr. Cecil Rhodes' House, Groot Schnur.



time weapons of the whites and of the blacks. Mr. Rhodes has a mania for collecting, and his collection is as interesting as one will find in many a museum. It contains numerous quaint things unearthed at Zimbabye, amongst them being a queer bird carved in stone, and a variety of gold ornaments. I have closely studied that bird, which has a fascination for me, but I couldn't make anything of it. It was the work of some ancient visitor to the land of the Mashonas—probably Phœnician. But why was it fashioned, and what bird did it represent? I know of no bird now in existence that it in any way resembles. It probably had some religious significance.

Mr. Rhodes has a great liking for this carved stone thing, and he has surrounded it with various romantic fancies; for this practical hard-headed man has his romantic side. The latest additions to Mr. Rhodes' most interesting collection of curios are Lobengula's seal and gun.

It has been said that Mr. Rhodes is a woman-hater; but this is a libel. True, he does not court woman's society, and he is never found pouring empty nothings into a pretty woman's ear, but there are some women—women of the intellectual order—for whom he has an admiration. His

aversion to women's society lies in the fact that he has little or no time to devote to them; and women in society demand so much of a man's time. It is an axiom with him that the man who plays his chances off his own bat, unhampered by woman's advice or interference, has the greater chance of succeeding in the battle of life. He agrees with Ibsen that the strongest man is he who stands alone. But then very few men can stand alone. It may be possible for Mr. Cecil Rhodes, but the majority of men find it more pleasant, if not always so advantageous, to run in double than in single harness.

Mr. Rhodes is unlike most men one meets—or he would not be Mr. Rhodes—and he is entitled to have peculiar as well as big ideas; and as he would, I fancy, be inclined to admit himself, some of his ideas *are* peculiar. He is peculiar in his dress, and peculiar in his way of living. At home, although there are enough best bedrooms to put up quite a large circle of friends, he never sleeps in the house itself, but goes to rest in a room fitted up in an outhouse in the garden. There he knows he can be alone—alone with his work, his thoughts, free from intrusion, and away from every sound of life. It matters not whether his home

be full of friends or empty, he goes to his lonely room across the yard all the same. This may, by those who never do an unorthodox thing in their lives, be considered extremely odd, but there is such a thing as the oddness of habit, and with the oddness of habit there is often a method. There was a method in Hamlet's supposed madness.

Mr. Rhodes is never so happy as when on the open veldt with a gun in his hand and no companion but a dog. With respect to dress, there is no man who cares less about what he wears than Mr. Cecil Rhodes; he is often careless to excess, and many are the amusing stories told about him in this connection. Perhaps the most amusing is the one related about his adventure at the Kimberley Exhibition, which has the merit, I am assured, of being perfectly true.

There was a great function at the Exhibition, at which Mr. Rhodes was put down for a leading part. He arrived at the gates of the Exhibition to find he had left his pass at home, and the gatekeeper, not knowing him, refused him admission.

"How much?" asked Mr. Rhodes.

"Two shillings," replied the man.

At this Mr. Rhodes put his hand in his pockets

to find—not at all an unusual thing with him—that he hadn't any money about him.

"I am afraid I've left my purse behind," he said after the fruitless search; "but I suppose my watch will do." He put his hand into his pocket to find that his watch had been likewise left behind. He then told the gatekeeper who he was.

The gatekeeper, with as much politeness as falls to the lot of people in his position, replied—

"Who're you getting at?"

Mr. Rhodes rejoined that he didn't want to get at any one, but that he wanted to get into the Exhibition, that he hadn't any money or anything really of value about him; the fact, however, remained that he was Cecil Rhodes. The janitor still remained unconvinced, and the Napoleon of South Africa might have cooled his heels outside indefinitely had not some one lent him the necessary two shillings.

I have been told that Mr. Rhodes afterwards sent the gatekeeper five pounds in recognition of his having so unhesitatingly done his duty. I don't know how the friend in need fared; but Cecil Rhodes is not the man to forget him.

Mr. Rhodes' motto is, "Be white to me and I'll be white to you—always." Not a bad motto either.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT I THINK OF THE KAROO

BEFORE dealing with Kimberley, the next place of importance after leaving Cape Town, I have here set down a few impressions of the journey northward through the Karoo Desert. After leaving the coast and reaching the mountains, you get some really first-class scenery, and are struck with the engineering difficulties which, in building the railway, had to be overcome. I have seen nothing like the Karoo in all my travels: there are bits of Patagonia, I believe, like it; and it bears, so far as I can judge, a somewhat close resemblance to the rock-strewn country in the Pamirs. But in point of desolation it would, I should imagine, knock spots off the Roof of the World; and it does run even barren Labrador (which I know very well) a really close second. When Nature first took in hand the construction

of the Karoo, she intended it as a vast grazing plain, something like the prairies of the Great Lone Land. She gave it a fair quantity of soil, some pasture, and dotted it here and there with bushes. But the devil and all his imps, thinking there was enough fairly level and fruitful ground in South Africa, conceived the brilliant idea of laying it waste. They turned it into a vast skittle-ground, setting up a few odd mountains for nine-pins, and using gigantic boulders as balls.

For countless ages the little game must have gone on, until all the big mountains had their tops taken off, and the last available boulders had been smashed to atoms. When almost every square inch of the land had been covered with stones and fractured boulders, the devil and his playmates, thinking they had sufficiently spoiled Nature's original handiwork, left off the game. The Karoo prairie became the Karoo Desert: and so it will remain for all time. Sheep thrive upon the pasture that is still to be found, and the soil is, in places, sufficiently rich to grow almost anything; which goes to show what a magnificent grazing and farming land the Karoo might have been had not the Evil One elected to turn it into a skittle-ground.

But there is a charm, at first sight, about the Karoo, even in its lóneliness. Where in all South Africa are the breezes so fresh and the sunsets so beautiful? But one soon gets tired of even the most invigorating air, and the most beautiful of sunsets. One cannot live upon either. This I discovered when the train I was on broke down miles away from where there was anything to eat or drink. How hungry the air and how thirsty the sun made one! And how the rock-strewn land irritated the eye, and created longings for an English meadow, or even a detached villa grass-plot! Then, when the night came on, how cold it was! The Karoo day air makes you feel as if you could, provided you had nothing better to partake of, enjoy a stewed top-boot; but the Karoo night air chills you as no other air—closely following the setting of a broiling sun—can do; it makes a man feel as if he were suddenly placed in a refrigerator. I know I felt like it, and I was well wrapped up in furs. Furs in South Africa? Of course! You want furs there in the cold winter nights every bit as much as you do in Russia. South Africa is not the land *par excellence* of "nodings on." You don't want very much on, it is true, at mid-day, when the sun peels off slips of skin from your nose and

a Niagara of perspiration runs down your back; but when the sun has set, you are glad of the thickest of underclothes and the heaviest of fur coats. I am, of course, referring to up-country, and not to the coast towns.

The best thing to keep you warm is a *kaross*. This is a number of common or garden sheep-skins sewn together by the natives. Warm, however, as it will keep you, it won't shut out a first-class Karoo mid-winter night wind; there is no keeping such a wind out. It would, I verily believe, get through cemented seams, and through fur a foot thick. It is a wind that will also cause sand to permeate where no ordinary driven sand could ever hope to enter. Glass windows and closely-fitting doors are about as useful in keeping it out as a cinder-sieve would be. One's only chance of being free from the sand in passing through the Karoo, when a demon night wind was in full blast, would lie in being hermetically sealed up like tinned salmon.

Even the blacks don't take kindly to the Karoo. Here and there, within easy reach of the rail, you see a kraal containing some degenerate specimens of the "man and brother" genus; but I don't think the blacks ever looked upon the Karoo as a

particularly happy hunting-ground. *Meerkats* like it; so do snakes and ants and secretary birds. There may also be other members of the animal world who think the Karoo the most delightful place on earth; but, for the moment, I can't place them.

If any one wants fresh, invigorating air that will set him up more effectively than any medicine made by mortal man, let him sojourn for a while in the heart of the Karoo. There he will find a sky as blue, and a sun as bright, as in Italy, and a hunger on him that will cause him to wonder why he ever criticized adversely the worst dinner ever served up in the most slatternly of seaside boarding-houses. He will feel a bit lonely, and the dreary sameness of the scenery will pall upon him, after a while; but he will begin and end by saying he never felt better in his life. The devil spoilt the look of the Karoo as a show place, but he has left it the invigorating air and gladdening sunshine.

It is astonishing what ignorance prevails in this country with respect to travelling in South Africa. A very large number believe that such a thing as a railway a few miles outside of Cape Town is unknown, and that the principal mode of travel is

by bullock-wagon, with an occasional ride on a four-horse coach.

There are coaches and there are bullock-wagons; and by way of connection with the railway you occasionally use the former, and when time is no sort of object you may use the latter; but South Africa is well supplied with railways. There is a line from Cape Town direct to Kimberley and on to Mafeking, and one to Johannesburg and on to Pretoria; then there are lines to Port Elizabeth and East London, besides several branch lines. The trains are not racers, but the carriages are well fitted up, and travelling is made as comfortable as possible. All the lines in Cape Colony are managed by the Government. To Mr. Elliott, the General Manager, I have to tender my sincere thanks for many courtesies and for much useful information. The suavity of the General Manager seems to affect all in the employ of the Government railways; and it is remarkable how anxious every official is to serve you, and to make things generally comfortable for you, and how exceedingly polite he is about it the while.

The politeness of the Cape Government Railway officials is in marked contrast to the insolent abruptness of some of the minor officials on the

Netherlands Railway, which runs through the South African Republic. You note the change directly you are out of the Free State. "Your ticket, please," of the Cape Government official has no existence in the Transvaal; neither has it an equivalent. The Netherlands Railway man delights in making himself as tiresome as possible; he chooses the most inconvenient moment for examining your ticket, and, when he does it, it is with a brusqueness that is most irritating. I have been aroused in the dead of night to find a hand on my shoulder, and a rough form bending over me demanding an immediate examination of my ticket. I have had him leave the door open, letting in the cold veldt air; I have had him nearly blind me with the lamp he has been carrying; and I have been caused through him to "language" more than has been good for either my present or hereafter. I verily believe that the discourtesy of a minor official of the Netherlands Railway would make a missionary, awakened in the middle of the night, desire to "language," even if it did not actually bring about that result.

As I have said, everything is arranged for the comfort of the passengers on the Cape Government Railway systems. You can eat almost as com-

fortably as you can at your own dinner-table, and sleep almost as comfortably as you can in your own bed, except when the carriage takes to rocking over a bit of badly-ballasted line; then you feel like the baby on the tree top, with the expectation that something will break and that you will fall. But in the main, travelling by rail in South Africa is as good as in most European countries, and far better than in some. It is, on the whole, dusty travelling, and no matter how many times you may wash yourself on the journey, you invariably arrive at your destination looking more like a half-caste Hottentot than a white man. But this is the fault of the country and not of the railway.

CHAPTER V

WHAT I THINK OF KIMBERLEY

MUCH of the glory of Kimberley has departed. That is, Kimberley of to-day is not the Kimberley of some fifteen years ago. Then it was the Mecca of the prospector, the digger, the trader, the financier, the adventurer, the showman, and the peripatetic "ne'er-do-well." Just as London is supposed to be paved with gold, Kimberley's blue clay was studded with diamonds—as thickly as an old-fashioned Christmas pudding is studded with plums—all to be had for the digging, the bargaining or—the stealing.

They—to use a South Africanism—were high old times for those with luck as well as for those with enterprise; whilst they were higher still for those in the know, operating within—or without—the pale of the law. That was before the birth of Johannesburg, and before Mr. Cecil Rhodes con-

ceived the gigantic scheme of consolidating the diamond interests. Now, Kimberley is the Mecca of no one save the Diamond Syndicate. The members of this Syndicate visit Kimberley and buy the week's, month's, or quarter's output in much the same fashion as the English potato-dealers descend upon Jersey and purchase the season's potato crop. Just like potatoes, diamonds in the rough are divided into classes—big 'uns and little 'uns, good-coloured 'uns and off-coloured 'uns; and the eyes of the Syndicate are as keen as those of the potato-dealers in discerning the sound from the unsound, the marketable from the unmarketable, those which will cut well from those which won't. For diamonds, like potatoes, cut to advantage—or otherwise.

Those of the fair sex who read this chapter will, I have no doubt, object to the comparison. A potato is not a diamond, neither is a diamond a potato; but there is no reason why the humble "spud" should not be worth as much as the raw diamond—in a land where there was neither fashion nor women the former would be worth far more than the latter. The potato, at least, fills the stomach, whilst the diamond simply serves as an outward adornment; coloured glass would fulfil the

purpose equally well. But whilst the vanity of man and the covetousness of woman continue, Kimberley will have a profitable existence. Take away its diamonds, and Kimberley would be as dead as the deadest city of the Zuyder Zee.

Just as all Johannesburg lives and breathes gold, Kimberley lives and breathes diamonds. Everybody in Kimberley is, in some way or other, dependent upon the diamond production—from the proudest White to the humblest, dirtiest Black.

Kimberley, as a town, does not look as if it had been built to stay. It has a run-up-in-a-night appearance, and, although some may find its general jerkiness of architecture quaint, no one, I take it, would find it either picturesque or imposing. Corrugated iron is exceedingly serviceable and easy to handle by the builder; but, frankly, it is not pretty; and what a lot of corrugated iron has been used in the construction of Kimberley! You see it everywhere, and you long for a stone or brick building with slated roof or old-fashioned thatch. Stone and brick are evidently scarce in Diamond Town. In place of the common or garden flower-pots, painted meat-tins stand in many a window; they answer the purpose required of them, but nothing —not even the varied coats of paint and enamel—

can disguise the fact that they were once meat-tins. It was the first time I had seen the tin coverings of corned beef and boiled tongue put to such a use, and it struck me as being as peculiar as it was eminently practical. It is a small thing in its way, this meat-tin flower-pot, but, small as it is, it adds to the "metally" appearance of the town.

It is possible that had there been no De Beers Consolidation, Kimberley would have gone ahead, architecturally speaking, far more than it has; now, the imagination has to fill in the many-storied blocks and solid squares which the opponents of the De Beers Consolidation so emphatically assert would, by this, have been *en evidence.* As it is, the gentleman responsible for the naming of the streets has, or had, very big ideas—or can it be that he was a humourist? He has given Kimberley a Piccadilly and a Regent Street, either of which might just as well have been called Dust Lane or Forsaken Alley, for the few huts they contain seem to be mostly inhabited by dirty-coloured folk and their pigs. One does not do an afternoon crawl in Kimberley's Piccadilly or one's shopping in its Regent Street; but the dirty-coloured folk and their four-legged companions seem quite happy there.

With Capetowners, Kimberley is always a "mere mining village," whilst a Yankee, who, it goes without saying, did not "strike ile" there, once described it as "a dead town, barred and padlocked, with the key in the hands of the past." Neither of these descriptions of Kimberley is accurate. It is something more than a mere mining village, and, as to being dead, why, for its size, it is one of the liveliest places in all South Africa. If, in outward appearance, Kimberley is not particularly "towny," its inhabitants are distinctly of the "towny" species. Your Kimberleyite prides himself upon his "flyness" and general up-to-datedness. He keeps himself very much in touch with the mother country, and knows what is going on there almost as well as if he were residing within sound of Big Ben, He never tries to throw off the Englishman, and resents being called a Colonial. With him, Kimberley is simply his place of business: his Home, in thought, is always in England. Kimberley folk struck me as being exceedingly hospitable, and nature has not yet built the man who could contain all the various offers of liquid refreshment that the hospitably-inclined Kimberleyites would make him.

In most places in the Colonies you find here and

there a man anxious to "shout" for you; but in Kimberley every one you meet insists upon doing the "shouting"; and the oldtime townsman who allows himself to be treated by the visitor at sight is not thought very much of. You may, if you have been included in an inner ring of friends, be permitted to join in with a throw of the ivories, and if your throw is the worst, you may do yourself the pleasure of standing drinks all round; but, as a general rule, the inner ring much prefer one of their own number being landed than the visitor who has joined them.

A great deal is done with the dice-box in Kimberley. Just as we in England toss a man to see who shall pay, in Kimberley they settle the matter with the dice. If Jones meets Robinson and asks him to have a drink, Robinson suggests a shake with the dice, and the suggestion is invariably accepted. If Jones loses, he not only stands Robinson a drink, but all who may be in the immediate neighbourhood of the dice-box; and Robinson does the same if luck be against him. There is nothing mean about a Kimberley man on the "shout." In Kimberley, the dice-box settles many a difference of opinion, as well as decides who shall provide smokes or liquid refreshments.

Should A call B a liar, B might knock him down, or he might call for the dice and shake A to see whether he were right. If C and D had arranged to go for a day's shooting, and C wanted to go to one place and D to another, the dice-box would probably be called in to decide whether the former's or the latter's suggestion should be accepted. I have heard of men deciding by a throw which of them should be free to woo a lady upon whom they had set their hearts. I once saw a man, who had had quite as much as he could carry, decide by a shake of the dice-box whether he should have another drink or go home to bed. The decision was against his going to bed there and then; eventually he got there, but he was carried.

In a hotel bar, a weary wanderer brought in a half-starved, dejected-looking cur, and asked the men who were there to buy it. One of them gave the wanderer a shilling for it, and then proceeded to raffle it for five pounds—at a pound a share. Four or five times was that dejected cur raffled for, the proceeds of the pool being spent in champagne. When the men had grown weary of rattling the dice-box, and the champagne had ceased to have further charms for them, the last winner of

the cur was permitted to leave with his win. With it under his arm he left the hotel, as proud as the thrifty countryman who secures a prize goose at Christmastide, and proceeded to board a tram-car. On alighting from the car he slipped and fell, and the cur escaped. The man was seriously hurt, and the much-raffled dog returned to its original master —to be shaken for again, maybe, should it come in contact with those with a fancy for such sport.

"Easy come, easy go," is an old and fairly true adage; and although money does not, just now, come easily to the good folk of Kimberley, they are never tired of showing how easily they can make it go. They are a kind-hearted folk, and their hands are ever in their pockets to help this man or that family that has fallen upon evil times. A genuine deserving case never cries for help unheeded; and those who don't cry out, and try to bear their burdens in silence, are pretty sure to have their necessities made known — for it is a small community in Kimberley—and then the hat is passed round, and, without the slightest fuss or ostentation, almost every one contributes something. Kimberley beats almost every other town in the world in this matter. In most places it is a crime to have tried and failed, but in Kimberley

it is—when the trial has been a plucky one—simply a misfortune—a misfortune which, they know, in a speculative community might overtake the best of them.

Kimberley has the best club in all South Africa;[1] this much is conceded even by Johannesburg. One meets everybody who is anybody at this club; it is the fashionable *rendezvous*, and not to be a member of the club is not to know who is who in Kimberley business and social life. The club, however, opens its doors to every visitor with proper credentials, and if the members "catch on" to him they never fail to make much of him.

Kimberley is the most English—that is, British—town in Cape Colony. The gentle Boer has, to use an Americanism, "no show" in Kimberley. The canny Scotsman is much to the fore, and the Chosen People are well represented. Almost every other man you meet has the prefix Mac to his name—by right or by usage—even those of distinct Semitic origin. It seems to be the ambition of most people in Kimberley to be Mac something or other. This, I presume, arises from the fact that the Scottish element in Diamond

[1] Since writing this, the club-house has been burnt down, and a new one is in course of erection.

Town is an influential as well as a popular one. A famous singer discovered the advantage of being Scottish when she sang in Kimberley. The Scottish element rallied round her to a man, and made her the big financial success she was. They met her at the station, bagpiped her an' a' that, and escorted her in triumph to her hotel. In connection with this demonstration a very funny thing happened. The proprietor of the two best hotels —an awfully good fellow hailing from the Land o' Cakes—decked himself out in his national costume and took a leading part in the welcome accorded to the fair singer on her arrival at the station; he, in fact, drove with her to the hotel. Something about the hotel did not quite please Miss ——, and so she sent for the proprietor. After discarding his Highland attire and getting into his everyday clothes, mine host of the Queen's put in an appearance. To him the fair singer, who did not recognize him as one of the deputation, made her plaint, expressing her desire to go to another hotel.

"Certainly," replied Mr. F., "why not try the Central?"

Miss —— thought she would try the Central, and to the Central her things were moved.

There she did not seem any better pleased; she wanted this and that, and finally asked to see the proprietor. To her came Mr. F., and she began pouring out her grievances, finally expressing her intention of going to another hotel.

"Certainly," answered Mr. F., with his modest smile, "why not try the Queen's?"

"Why, I have already tried the Queen's," quickly returned Miss ——, "and"—looking at Mr. F. intently—"you are the same man who recommended me to try the Central."

"Precisely," replied Mr. F., "I happen to be the proprietor of both hotels, and if neither of those I have suit you, then I am afraid, having no third hotel, I cannot recommend another to you."

After a good look at Mr. F., it suddenly dawned upon the famous cantatrice that she had seen him in connection with something outside of the hotels which he and his charming wife so successfully run, and she remarked it.

"Oh, yes," he replied, "I met you at the station; I was one of the deputation; don't you remember?"

Miss —— did remember, and she stayed where she was, and enjoyed her stay; which, as Mrs. Tree says in *The Bunch of Violets*, was "very sweet" of her.

This is only a by-the-way note; but it goes to show that the prima donna was somewhat hard to please, and that the popular proprietor of Kimberley's two hotels is a bit of a wag—which he is. He cuts a fine figure, too, in his kilt, and is the envy of the various MacMoses and MacAarons in Diamond Town, who, whilst not resenting being taken for brawny Highlanders, dare not go the whole hog in the matter of kilts an' a' that. That, indeed, would be a sight for the gods.

Speaking of performances in Kimberley, no one who hasn't given a show in that town can form the slightest idea what the "gods" there are like.

Kimberley's "gods" are unlike any other "gods" in the wide world. The *habitués* of the Paradises in other theatres are generally roughs or little folk who secure places in this exalted region on payment of what is vulgarly called a "tanner"—or less; in fact, a theatre-goer can, in some places, become a "god" on payment of a penny. But there is nothing of the "tanner" or the penny element about your Kimberley "god"; he pays his half-crown like a sportsman, and goes up-stairs, not because it is cheaper—for in some cases he could just as well take a stall—but solely because he can have more fun there.

He generally commences by passing a running comment upon those down below, and winds up by an attempt to draw the performer. Should he succeed in drawing him, or any one in the audience, his delight knows no bounds. This is what he has paid his half-crown for, and this is what his chums have paid their half-crowns for too. If no one is drawn, it is voted a dull evening—no matter what the performance *on the stage itself* may be.

This sort of thing must be trying for the amusement-goers in Kimberley, for no one knows who will be the next one to be gone for. When the "gods" have had their turn, we will say with a director of De Beers, they may take in hand a parson, a doctor, a magistrate, or any other prominent townsman. They will chaff him about his hat, the cut of his clothes, the baldness of his head, and all sorts of personal matters; nothing, in fact, is too personal for them. This is not only before the curtain rises, but between the acts; in fact, it is only when the curtain is up that those in the stalls have a little breathing-time—the "gods" then are too busy taking in hand the performers.

Many people in Kimberley, wholly irrespective of the merits of the entertainment, go to a place of amusement simply to hear the "latest" about the

poor mortals below from the "gods" above, whilst not a few stop away from dislike of affording amusement to their friends. One requires the self-possession of—well, a De Beers director to be able, with equanimity, to run the gauntlet of the witticisms of the Kimberley "gods."

Of course I did the mines, the compound, and the De Beers collection. I began with the compound, and the Kaffir life there I found both novel and interesting. I don't know the exact number of blacks who are confined there, but I know they run into thousands; they are of various tribes, ages, sizes, and characters. Some are lazy, whilst others are industrious; some are really handsome, but many are atrociously ugly, with an ugliness that revolts. But lazy or industrious, handsome or ugly, they one and all have to undergo the same *régime*. For the term they bind themselves to the De Beers Company, they are the company's prisoners as well as its labourers. The compound is one vast prison, where the Kaffir works out his servitude for a certain wage. He is treated well, but strictly. He can take his exercise within the limits of the compound, but outside he must not go until the term of his voluntary servitude is worked out. What he wishes to buy—in the

matter of food and clothing, in articles both necessary and unnecessary for the inside and outside gratification of his body—he can purchase at the company's stores. This supplying of the natives with food and clothing on the part of the company is naturally resented by the tradesfolk in the town. But I fail to see how it could otherwise be carried out. The Kaffir is not allowed outside of the compound gates, and consequently he could not make purchases from the tradesfolk even if he were so inclined. He might, it is true, make his purchases on his release, when he would be flush with money, but, as a general rule, he is already well supplied by the company. This the Kimberley tradesman thinks hard, and he sighs for the days when he, and he alone, made a big thing out of the Kaffir miner.

It may, at first sight, seem hard upon the Kaffir that his liberty, because he offers his services to the company, should be curtailed in this fashion; but he knows what he has to go through when he signs the agreement, and his incarceration for a year or two years, or whatever the term may be, is a perfectly voluntary one. If he were allowed to go into the town at the end of his day's work, the De Beers Company would soon be in liquidation.

He would swallow or otherwise conceal the biggest diamonds he could lay his hands upon, and forthwith trade them outside. The raw Kaffir is fairly honest; but there would be plenty of white men in Kimberley ready to teach him how to be dishonest, and he would not be slow to profit by the knowledge. The Kaffir labourer in the mines knows a good diamond from a bad one, and if he can get a chance of helping himself to a first-class stone, he seizes that chance. His principal method of concealment is swallowing the stones just before the day of his release. But the paternal De Beers Company, with much solicitude for his digestion, confines him in a detention room for three days before he is let through the compound gates. In the detention room, the company's doctor gives him a little medicine, in order to relieve him of any ill effects that the swallowing of the stones might have caused. Of course, the Kaffir would much rather administer the pill himself—*after he had left the compound*—but the company, not unnaturally, prefers itself to see the effectiveness of the medicine administered.

I have said that the Kaffir knows a good stone when he sees one; but sometimes he makes a mistake. One made a very serious mistake, when

he swallowed the glass ball of a soda-water bottle in the full belief that he had effectively disposed of a diamond of priceless value. It may be worth a dishonest Kaffir's while to run the risk of doing "time" for a £1,000 rough diamond, but for a glass ball—never. How very foolish that glass-ball-swallowing Kaffir must have felt, and how he must have cursed his ignorance!

On the whole, the Kaffirs in the compound seem to enjoy their confinement. They have their work, outside of delving for diamonds, and the bangles they make in their off-time are exceedingly artistic. Some of them act as tailors, bootmakers, and the like, for the others, and, I should say, make a very good thing of it.

The Kaffirs have their amusements too; they read and sing and dance, and those who can't either read or sing, pay the others to do it for them. Scriptural books are the favourite reading —favourite because they have no other literature, and hymn tunes are the favourite airs for precisely the same reason. But the pastime which exercises the greatest fascination for these captive blacks is a game of "shovel-stone"—the exact name of it I don't know. It has as much fascination for the players as a game of poker has for their white

masters. The Kaffir is a born gambler, and, it goes without saying, he doesn't play for love—or nuts. Arthur Roberts showed us in *Claude Duval* how a "spoof" game of his invention should be played; but, clever as he is in spoofing others, I will willingly wager anything that I can find him a dozen Kaffirs who will break him in ten minutes at a game of "shovel-stone." It is the finest spoof game I have ever seen played.

Accidents in the mines are of frequent occurrence, but the patients are well cared for in the hospital. It is astonishing how brave these soulless Kaffirs are under operation, and how patient under medical treatment. They will bear without a murmur the loss of a limb; but when a limb is gone they will mourn its loss as much as a mother would mourn the taking off of her only child. The loss of a leg or an arm makes the return to their tribe impossible, for imperfect specimens of Kaffir mankind are cast out or quietly done away with. A limbless native, therefore, not only loses his manhood, but his chances of existing in this world. It would be interesting to know what eventually becomes of the Kaffirs who have left an arm or a leg behind them in the De Beers hospital.

After making the round of the compound, I was, a few days later, taken to the workings. I saw the wash-up, handled the stones as they were being sorted, and generally made myself familiar with the several processes employed in extracting the precious stones from the blue clay. Did any of the diamonds stick to my fingers? Alas, no! Did I receive a specimen diamond? Also alas, no! But, at the end of my tour of inspection, I was politely handed, with as much formality as if I had been made a present of a packet of pure white stones, *a small packet of garnets.* Garnets are, by the bye, so plentiful in the mines that they use them, I believe, in gravelling the paths. I had thought, as a sort of novelty, of gravelling the paths in my garden with those I have; but I haven't enough to go round. Perhaps, when the De Beers directors hear of my inability to carry out my desire in this direction, they will kindly send me a few more small parcels.

But it is not on the "floor," as it is technically termed, that one gets anything like an idea of the wealth of the De Beers mines in the matter of diamonds; one must go to the offices of the company itself to know that. There are displayed for the bewilderment of the curious visitor

thousands upon thousands of pounds' worth of diamonds. There are yellow ones and white ones, round ones and diamond-shaped ones, smooth ones and jagged ones; all to be handled like so many beads. Diamonds, in the rough, look about as valuable as pieces of glass, and far less interesting than sugar lollypops. It is only when they are cut and polished that they are dangerous for mortals—especially women. I think even a woman could handle the largest packet of the finest raw diamonds without feeling the slightest sensation of envy. It would only be when specimens cut and polished were shown her that she would realize the fatal fascination diamonds have. Verily, I believe that the man who first cut and polished a diamond is answerable for all the crimes that diamonds have brought about. If diamonds had been left to their natural unattractiveness, the world would have known more honesty and virtue than it has. There is a mesmerism about a brilliant which some people find altogether irresistible. Its flashes blind them, intoxicate them, weaken them; and under its spell some folk are not able to call their souls, or their consciences, their own.

As I have said, the first diamond cutter is responsible for the follies and vices brought about

by the brilliant; I think he must have been the devil himself. Nature made in her laboratory certain lumps of carbon which she valued at about the same rate as she values pebbles, but man dug them out of the clay, and the devil saw his opportunity. "Cut them and polish them," he whispered; and foolish man cut and polished them, and the devil drew thousands into his net every year afterwards. Diamonds have been the best playing-cards the devil has ever possessed; they are always more or less trumps—ace high.

I was speaking, a few paragraphs back, about diamonds sticking to one's fingers. No one, who has not visited Kimberley, can form any idea of the rigorous care exercised by the De Beers Company in protecting its interests. The law protects the diamond trade far more stringently than all the other trades in Cape Colony put together. Under the Illicit Diamond Buying Act, no one can carry a rough stone about with him—no matter how acquired — without having first obtained a police permit. Before the permit can be secured, the applicant is liable to undergo a very rigorous examination. To carry a rough stone about with one, is to run the risk of being arrested and doing "time" on the breakwater. There are

always detectives on the look-out for those breaking the I.D.B. Act; in fact in Kimberley it is difficult to know who is, and who is not, a detective. But in spite of the vigilance of the myrmidons of the law, not a little illicit diamond buying goes on; nothing like, however, what there was a few years ago. Then—or rumour lies (perhaps it does)—not a few who flaunt their wealth in London and elsewhere used to break the law with marked cunning and success. The breakwater did not, it is true, have the pleasure of their company; but they—so rumour asserts—ought to have been employed in constructing that national undertaking equally with those who had the misfortune to be found out.

Just as the bank cashier by familiarity gets indifferent to the wealth he daily handles, so does the man who handles the diamonds in the De Beers safes become indifferent to the vast value of the gems entrusted to his care. He, I believe, thinks no more of them than the farm labourer does of the beans he fills his master's sacks with.

There are some curious specimens — freaks of nature, so to speak—in the offices of the De Beers Company. There you see stones that are black, pink, and blue, and of as many colours as Joseph's coat is popularly supposed to have been. These

stones are not for sale, neither are they to be given away—save to a—well, wild horses shall not drag from me the class or rank of man, woman, or child to whom a diamond, fresh or otherwise, can, and is given. It is enough, alas and alack! that I do not come within this class or rank.

Everything in Kimberley is, as I have pointed out, centered round De Beers. De Beers is the good parent to whom every one in Kimberley looks for an allowance and a line in its will. Papa De Beers must do everything for Kimberley; give her roads and trees and electric light, water, model villages, and heaven only knows what else. He is always doing something, but his children are ever crying out for more, sometimes—considering all things—not unreasonably. As De Beers has taken Kimberley under its paternal care, it is only right that De Beers should do its duty—and now and then a bit over—by its children. Towns, like children, desire that bit over in the shape of extra pocket-money, and a little present on birthdays and holidays.

The model village of Kenilworth, owned by the De Beers Company, and housing its white workmen, is an exemplar of cleanliness, prosperity,

and picturesqueness; it is well planted, well laid out, and is quite an oasis of greenery in a desert of stone and sterility. Then, too, the plantation, owned and cultivated by the company, is well worth a visit. One sees what man can do with Kimberley soil, with care, attention, and a plentiful supply of water. Having erected its model village, and laid out its useful as well as ornamental plantations, it only remains for the company, in its paternal capacity, to go one step further and found a Zoological Garden. *That* would be much appreciated.

I cannot finish this chapter upon Kimberley without a word with respect to its dust-storms. A Kimberley dust-storm is unlike any other to be found in all South Africa—or, for the matter of that, in the wide world. Johannesburg claims to be able to beat Kimberley at its own game: but when a Johannesburger tells you this, don't you believe him. Your Johannesburger is proud of everything about Johannesburg; he has everything that is largest and finest in the whole of South Africa, but he simply errs on the side of patriotism when he tells you that a Johannesburg dust-storm is equal to a Kimberley dust-storm.

It isn't a patch upon it. A Johannesburg dust-storm makes you look very dirty, and it fills your eyes, ears, and all that sort of thing; but the article made in Kimberley simply buries you, for the time being. It enters your system, too, like the brine of the sea, and it takes about ten consecutive Turkish baths to get the effects of one Kimberley dust-storm out of the pores of your skin. If it be thought that I exaggerate, why then go and try a Kimberley dust-storm on your own epidermis.

But in spite of its dust-storms, its want of "towniness," and general unfinished appearance, Kimberley is not at all a bad place to put some time in; the people are "all-right" there, and they will show you anything there is to be seen, and do anything they can to make things lively and pleasant for you.

Just a word in conclusion: Kimberley produces diamonds, and not gold. Johannesburg it is that produces gold, and not diamonds. Kimberley is in Cape Colony, and *is* British. Johannesburg is in the South African Republic, and is *not* British, although it should be. I mention this because some London newspapers, which certainly

ought to know better, are repeatedly mixing the two places, until the British public don't know t'other from which; the two towns are as distinct from each other as London and Paris, and a good deal further apart.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT I THINK OF BARNIE BARNATO

ONE of South Africa's celebrities is undoubtedly Mr. B. I. Barnato; and, long before either Mayfair or the City bothered themselves about his existence, he was a power in Kimberley.

All great or notorious men have, in the eyes of the world, no prefixes to their names; and the reputed several-times millionaire, whose name is so closely associated with South African finance, has already earned greatness—or notoriety—by the readiness on the part of the public to dispense with the prefix in speaking of him. With his intimates he is, and has always been, plain "Barnie"; there is no necessity to add the surname in referring to him—that is always implied and understood. It is left to the general public to tack on the superfluous "Mr." The little man, as a general thing, does not take kindly to being "Mr. Bar-

natoed"; he would much rather, I fancy, be "Barnied" all round. For in this world of common-place, he is certainly a being apart, a hater of formality, and an encourager of familiarity. To be plain "Barnie Barnato" with the world means in his eyes a household popularity similar to that enjoyed by a famous actor or author, whilst "Mr. Barnato" implies the unimpeachable respectability of a prosperous alderman.

Now there is none of this unimpeachable respectability about Barnie Barnato; he is, by instinct as well as by habit, a Bohemian. To conform to the usages of society, he outwardly dons society's orthodox top-hat and frock-coat, but in spirit he remains in flannels and a slouch hat. To fully comprehend what I mean, one must know the man.

Barnato has been trained in the best school the world knows—the school where the beginner has more kicks than ha'pence; he has had his share of the kicks, and now, profiting by his experience, he is getting his share—and a bit over—of the ha'pence. With the fairy tales associated with Barnie's early career, I have nothing to do; he may have been anything or everything; but whatever he did, or wherever he went, he never

failed to acquire knowledge or to profit by his experience. To know Barnie Barnato is in itself a liberal education. His store of information is both extensive and peculiar; and, as he unburdens himself, you cannot fail to be struck with the extent and peculiarity of that information.

Some people, full of good things, have to be pumped or squeezed to get anything out of; but Barnie requires neither pumping nor squeezing; he starts himself, and, when he is once started, heaven alone knows—he himself certainly doesn't —when he will finish. In his conversations there is nothing measured about Barnie; he flies from one topic to another with all the airy jauntiness of a butterfly. But jaunty though he be, and lightly though in conversation he touches upon things, he displays a keenness of observation and an inside knowledge of matters in general, that put him head and shoulders above the ordinary conversationalist.

He is one of those sort of men who, to use a somewhat inelegant expression, are always "on the spot"; and the man who imagines that he can take a rise out of Barnie generally awakens to the fact that he has swallowed a very hot pepper-pod in mistake for a mild-tasting radish.

In the good old days when no king considered his *entourage* complete without his jester, Barnie would have made a name for himself beyond that possessed by any of his contemporaries. His ready wit, his fund of anecdote, and his after-dinner stories would have convulsed any Court which had the good luck to secure his services. But I have a very shrewd notion that Barnie the Jester would not have been content with playing "spoof" for the amusement of kings at so much per year, but that he would—even in those pre-joint-stock days—have had an eye to the financial possibilities that the position he occupied afforded him, and have made the most of them.

As he, in his gleeful moments, plays the jester to-day, with his merry quips and shrewd observations, so he played it yesterday, and so will he play it to-morrow; there has not been and will not be any change in this direction in Barnie; age will not sober him and money will not dull him. How he may turn out when he has joined the angels I will not attempt to prophesy.

It is difficult to picture Barnie a millionaire; frankly I don't think he can be one. I don't say this with the object of casting any reflection upon his financial position, but simply because he is

unlike any other millionaire I have ever met—and I have met, and indeed known, many. With very few exceptions, the millionaires I have known have hung out the flag, showing the amounts they have been credited with being worth, fully expecting that each "o" flaunted in one's face should prove an irresistible incentive to instantaneous grovelling. I have never worshipped at the shrine of wealth, and there is something positively sickening about the latter-day rush after millionaires. I have, as a rule, found more intelligence, and a thousand-fold more politeness, amongst those whose brain was their only capital, than with those before whom the world, on account of their wealth, daily grovels in the dust.

The first millionaire I was ever brought in immediate contact with was an American. I had a letter to him, which I presented one day at Saratoga. He read it, "engineering" the while sundry expectorations through the rungs of a chair opposite, and when finished, said—

"Do you know anything about trotting horses?"

I confessed that I didn't know much about them.

"We ain't," he replied, "much good to each other then, I guess; a man, I reckon, as don't

know anything about trottin' horses ain't much good, anyway."

With this he "engineered" another copious expectoration and walked off.

This was my first introduction to a millionaire, and I thought his manners abominable, his habits disgusting, and his requirements of those who had the misfortune to be introduced to him somewhat peculiar.

Another millionaire I knew used to believe that the first proof of being a gentleman was to dress and act as much unlike a gentleman as it was possible to do. Of course he had many admirers. What reputed millionaire is without them? I once lent a gentleman-millionaire a penny. It is outstanding still. Perhaps he will remember me in his will.

Now Barnie is not like either of these, nor any of the others with whom I am acquainted. He is not the sort of man that money spoils; nothing can destroy his irrepressibleness.

I was a witness the other morning of a little joke he played upon a very august corporation. He was asked to write upon a form his name, place of residence, and occupation. Down went the first: "*B. I. Barnato*" — then "*Spencer*

House"; but when he came to occupation he hesitated.

"How shall I describe myself?" he asked. "Gentleman?—no, that's a bit too elastic."

"Dramatic author," I meekly suggested.

"That might do," he chirped. "Only we should have Haddon Chambers saying I *wasn't*, and then how should I stand? I have it—*toff*." And down went "*toff*" on the paper.

Presently the form came back with the request to know what "toff" meant.

"Oh," replied Barnie, with an imperturbable countenance, "say that it's the Hebrew for 'financial gentleman.'"

To hear Barnie on the drama, especially on the play he and Haddon Chambers are working at together, is, to employ one of his own expressive phrases, "a fair treat." Barnie has had some experience as an amateur actor, and goes through the various scenes the play is *supposed* to contain with a dramatic vigour that shows traces of an old hand. I say "supposed to contain"; for it goes without saying that Barnie is much too wide-awake to relate or illustrate before his friends and acquaintances any scene or situation that is actually in the play. He is not a man who likes being anticipated.

To do him justice, in the story-telling line, Barnie is "Signor Ben Trovato" *in excelsis:* he is never for a moment at a loss, and every story is well told. So well are they told that for the moment one loses sight of strict attention to time, circumstances, and accuracy on the part of the narrator.

At first sight Barnato is not what one would call fascinating, yet there is something about him that grows upon you. Is it that absolute confidence in himself plus a certain personal magnetism, or what? One thing, he is bright, and as quick as lightning, and positively brimming over with good-fellowship. These are qualities which retain attention when once it is attracted.

Of all the thousands of men of my acquaintance, if I had my choice of a companion, with whom to be cast upon a desert island, I would unhesitatingly select Barnie Barnato. I don't think I should have a dull moment in his company; but how I should fare if a ship came to fetch us off, and there was room on board for one only, would, I fancy, be quite another matter. Barnie, so great is his volubility and persuasive eloquence, would convince the crew, from the captain downwards, that, whilst the future of the world depended upon his immediate return to civilization, my present and

hereafter were bound up in remaining where I was. I have no doubt that, on safely returning to civilization, he would—if he remembered me, and he is at times sadly forgetful—at once fit out an expedition, regardless of expense, for the express purpose of rescuing me—and, maybe, give me an occasional "free call" into the bargain should I ever arrive safe and sound in the City.

This is not by way of showing that Barnato is heartless. On the contrary, he is as good-hearted a man as is to be found in this world of flinty selfishness, and the slate is pretty full of the names of those to whom he has done good turns. No man with a just claim to his sympathy ever appealed to him in vain, whilst his word is, it is said, his bond. Indeed I would rather take his word than his bond; the one would come from his heart, and the other from his calculating brain. But in every action in life—or better still, in every *trans*action—Barnie Barnato must come first. With him, the law of self-preservation is paramount. You note it in his reminiscences of his career and in his everyday action. Everything is tinged with the personal "I." There is no room in this "I" for another living person; it stands out distinct and in the largest possible type. An ordinary man in saying

"You and I" intimates an equal partnership, but with Barnie his "I" is the dominant partner, and the "you" is but a clerk in the firm. But it is just this breezy egotism, this dominating belief in himself, that has made Barnie Barnato what he is to-day. He places his plausible, convincing little person on a platform of his own erection, and commands those who form his audience. He knows full well—no one better in fact—the value of taking up such a position. The advantage is all with the performer. Never place yourself on the same level as your audience.

Barnie learnt all this in the old days when he first visited South Africa, and he has never once lost sight of it in all his dealings with his fellowmen. He, in his ideas, is a showman every inch of him, and a born advertiser. Frankly, I don't think Barnum was ever in it with him. I knew Barnum and I know Barnato, and, as a showman, Barnato could have given "the Greatest Showman on Earth," at his best, any number of points—and a beating.

Of Barnie's various financial undertakings it is not my intention to say anything. I am not dealing with him here from the standpoint of a financier,

—that is for another chapter—but am merely considering him from a psychological point of view.

I must confess he is a somewhat complex study, and one has to sift a good deal of the chaff before one gets to the corn, and cut pretty deeply through his *bonhomie* before one reaches the man himself.

He who tries to discover what Barnie Barnato wishes to hide, will have all his work cut out. For every thought for you Barnie keeps two to himself. Just as the Heathen Chinee keeps an extra ace or two up his sleeve to play when wanted, so Barnie reserves a mental ace just when you think you have seen his full hand. He has all a conjurer's quickness in making a mental *pas*, and a showman's readiness in explaining everything away to the complete satisfaction of his audience.

The only man who ever got the better of Barnato was Cecil Rhodes. Barnie admits it with humiliation coupled with sincere admiration. It was over the De Beers deal. "I gave way to him," says Barnie, with pride in his voice, "and he is the only man in the world I would have given way to. He is a great man is Cecil John Rhodes"; and, in speaking of the "Dictator of South Africa"

Barnie's "I" is, for once, pitched in a lower key. He is almost content to sit at the feet of the Colossus and look up to him; and one can gather how much this means, seeing that hero-worship does not enter very much into Barnie's composition. Yet another man to whom Barnie, in a measure, looks up is—Dr. Jameson. Whilst the greatness of intellect and the unflinching purpose of Rhodes evoke his unstinted admiration, the straightforwardness and the all-round lovableness of Jameson excite alike his wonderment and sympathy.

Barnie, I feel certain, thinks that Dr. Jameson's indifference concerning wealth is a censurable weakness, whilst the way he neglects to make use of his unique position is, in Barnie's opinion, positively flying in the face of Providence. Yet Barnie has a real liking for this *rara avis*. The Doctor is a bird of such an entirely different feather to what Barnie himself is, and—just as we sinful mortals, in moments when our consciences prick us, regret that we have so little in common with the saints—Barnie Barnato is, I verily believe, in like moments, full of a longing to have something of the Quixotic probity of "Dr. Jim."[1]

[1] This was written prior to Dr. Jameson's fateful raid.

But we cannot have all we want in this life; and I have no hesitation in saying that Barnie Barnato, as a modified Dr. Jameson, would not be a triumphant success. Barnie, as he is, is all right; he acts and thinks according to his lights, and no man living knows what he is about better than Barnie does, although at times he is so child-like and bland.

He is a man who is all wires; his physical restlessness is at times positively disturbing. He has plenty of mental, but no physical, application, and no idea whatever of economizing time. He would, without the slightest difficulty, think out the most intricate plot—sufficient to fill a three-volume novel—but he would have neither the patience nor the application to sit down at a desk and write a single chapter of it. Barnie hates the labour of writing, as much as he does the labour of reading. His varied information has been acquired by going through the world with his eyes open; very little of it is owing to books. In his idea, books should be all pictures and paragraphs, and newspapers all head-lines and full-stops. He likes to take the meaning of a thing in with his eye without bothering his head as to the real inwardness of it. There is nothing methodical about

Barnie; it is enough for him to create and inspire; method he leaves to others. Just as he likes to read in paragraphs, he speaks in paragraphs. His confidential stories are, for all the world, like so many "turns," one number following the other with as great a rapidity and as much in sequence as at a music-hall. The only difference is that at a music-hall one has the numbers to guide one as to what is coming next, whilst, with the loquacious Barnie, the "turns" are sprung upon one in the most unexpected fashion. One never knows what is to follow that which he has just rung the curtain down upon, or where he next may take one to.

This it is that makes him such vastly entertaining company. His ready wit, his funny little ways, and the unaffectedness of his accent are positively killing. But after one has sat and listened for hours, one is left to the reflection that one has come away without a single pearl, and that what looked like real gems were but coloured glass; for no one knows better than Barnie Barnato the use of language to conceal his real thoughts, or how to use it. With respect to past history, Barnie will freely tell you what he has done, leaving it to his listener, if he be so inclined, to go

and do likewise; but as to what Barnie is going to do—that is quite another matter. I don't even think he tells himself, but acts as the thought strikes him. When it is past history one is perfectly welcome to know all about it, and to admire his smartness accordingly. To be "in the know" with Barnie Barnato, one has to be more than his bosom companion; one has to penetrate into the very centre of his brain itself. What he communicates to his most trusted confidant is at best but a mere part of what he keeps to himself.

I look upon Barnie as a perfectly hopeless subject for a thought-reader; for it is not in the man to concentrate his thoughts in such a manner as would cause him to give himself away. If Barnie told me that he would give me a "fair chance" of defining what he was thinking of, I would stake the unencumbered portion of my already heavily-mortgaged soul that, in sporting parlance, it would be about a thousand to one chance. I should simply cut the Gordian knot by saying: "As it is a foregone conclusion that the dominant idea in your mind will be that I can't read your thoughts and that you won't have your thoughts read, I must decline to make the attempt."

And then Barnie would say: "Don't you think I would play fair?" At this I should look at Barnie, and Barnie would catch that look, and we should understand each other perfectly without another word.

The eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth maxim is one closely cherished by the mercurial Barnie, only he wants at least half-a-dozen teeth for the one extracted from him. He does not, on the surface, appear to be revengeful, but he can hate with all the patient hatred of his race, and the man who "does" Barnie a really bad turn may rest assured that Barnie will repay him with interest at the earliest opportunity.

I like a good hater; there is some grit in a man who can alike love and hate well—and Barnie, I believe, can do both. I have as great a contempt for slack-baked haters as I have for slack-baked lovers. Cecil Rhodes is a good hater, but, Juggernaut-like, he is for crushing to atoms those who deserve his hatred. Barnie, on the other hand, prefers to play with his victims. He will revenge himself upon a man with a smile and an anecdote. Rhodes is for bludgeoning an enemy who deserves being dispatched straight away with the butt end of the lance, but Barnato is for

pricking and goading him out of existence with the point. There is less suspense about Rhodes' method, but, as Barnie would say, there is more personal satisfaction and far more fun for your money in his own. I would like to have the opinion upon this point of the bears and other wicked folk who have sought a fall with Barnie and have been pricked for their pains.

But apart from the Puck-like spirit which animates Barnie in his dealings with those who have done him or have attempted to do him a bad turn, there is a natural manliness about the little man. He has all a fighting-cock's gameness and self-possession, and, in the old Kimberley days, could "put 'em up" with any one. I have heard a good deal of how he used to "put 'em up," and I can assure you that his fists have, even now, an exceedingly useful appearance. Barnie is full of homely maxims, most of which he started with in life. One of them is: "Never let a man put his hand on you without giving him 'what for,' and always have the first hit." Another is: "You have no right to spoil another man's game, as long as he plays it cleverly; he will expose himself soon enough when he ceases to be clever at it." Yet two more: "Never play the game above

the people's heads, but as they think they understand it; you have a bit in hand every time then;" and "always wind up with a good curtain, and bring it down before the public gets tired, or has had time to find you out."

One thing, I don't think Barnato is a good judge of character; if he be a good judge then it is a wonder to me that he does not the more readily see through certain people with whom he allows himself to be associated. His free-and-easy way and natural kindness of heart have in this direction much to answer for. They, however, frequently cause him to be seriously misjudged; more's the pity. A man with his great responsibilities cannot, in this hypercritical world, afford to be either indifferent to criticism or too Bohemian. But, as I have already said, Barnie Barnato is by instinct a Bohemian of the Bohemians; take away his Bohemianism and what was left of him would, from his point of view, not be worth living. He has of course his serious side, but, Barnie serious is scarcely Barnie himself. He is, however, always terribly in earnest about the various financial undertakings with which he is associated. He has certainly succeeded in convincing himself that everything he stands sponsor for has no equal

in the domain of finance, and this goes a long way towards convincing others. There is much to admire in this dominating belief in self, but what I most admire in Barnie Barnato is his marvellous perseverance and his practically unequalled pluck, both of which he has strikingly exemplified under exceptionally trying circumstances. But enough of Barnie Barnato—for the present.

CHAPTER VII

WHAT I THINK OF BLOEMFONTEIN

THIS will be a short chapter, for, frankly, I don't think much of Bloemfontein, and, thinking as I do, I see no reason why space should be wasted over the place. Let those who like Bloemfontein write at greater length about it.

In journeying by rail from Cape Town to Johannesburg, you have to pass through Bloemfontein; but it is not necessary to get off there except to have lunch or dinner at the station restaurant, which is run by a man whose good qualities lead me to believe that he cannot be a Bloemfonteiner. If the fates decree that you have to put in a whole day at Bloemfontein, go to the Free State Hotel, where an obliging Uitlander will do his best to make you comfortable. Do the town and, after dinner, go straightway to bed—which will be the only thing left you—and dream that you are a

thousand miles away from the most uninteresting spot in South Africa.

As a capital, Bloemfontein is a burlesque. Picture a few bark-shedding blue gums and other sickly-looking trees, a number of toy villas, a badly-paved main street, an unsightly, dirty market-place, a town-hall as big as an ordinary village school-room, some churches and a Parliament House—all this stuck in the middle of an arid stone-strewn plain—and you have the "well laid out and picturesque" town of Bloemfontein. When it rains, you run the risk of getting drowned in the flooded streets, and when it is fine you must take your chances of being blinded by the dust.

A nice place, truly, this Bloemfontein! And the inhabitants—*what* inhabitants! They are different from those of any other town in South Africa; and the rest of South Africa has every right to congratulate itself on the fact.

Just as public enterprise and public-spiritedness are contagious, so are narrow-mindedness and ignorance. Bloemfontein has never suffered from the former contagion. Maybe Bloemfontein is not wholly to blame for this; possibly there is something in the air, something in the desolate

surroundings of the place, something in the depressing spectacle of its more or less waterless *fontein* (from which the town takes its name) that will account for it; but, all the same, Bloemfontein is a dreary place. I do not like dreary places, and I do not like dreary and aggressively narrow-minded people. They may have their charms and attractions for some, but for me they have none.

One knows what a Russian village situated in the Jewish area is like, and one can imagine what a community made up of McDougalls and Ormiston Chants would be like; but you have to go to Bloemfontein with its Free State Boers, its anti-British Britishers, its renegade Teutons, and its dirty-coloured people, to get an idea of what that sort of mixture is like. It is a mixture you have never seen before in your travels—a mixture to be well shaken before taken. Most travellers shake the mixture, but do not take it.

With all his narrow-mindedness and his depressing ignorance, the typical Bloemfonteiner is a singularly aggressive animal. He mouths his political, social, and artistic views in a manner that calls for the speedy application of the gag; to hear a Bloemfonteiner upon Art is to at once make you regret that you had not been born

deaf, or that he had not been born dumb; as an Englishman, to hear him spout politics, is provocative of the *argumentum baculinum.*

Majuba was a deplorable incident, and no Englishman can think of it without sorrow mingled with shame; and one doesn't want "Remember Majuba," or "How about Majuba?" served up with every five minutes' conversation upon politics, as it is in Bloemfontein.

Until recently, the Orange Free State has been more or less content to work with the Cape Colony, but the success which has attended the efforts of the South African Republic at plundering the Uitlander is beginning to exercise the minds of Free State politicians as to the advisability of drawing closer the ties with the sister Republic. The Free Staters think there is not much more to be got out of the Cape Colony, and that there may be something to be got out of the South African Republic; and after all, Boer blood is very much thicker than water.[1]

[1] Recent events have proved the absolute correctness of this little prophetic utterance of mine, made some months ago. It will be remembered how the Free State massed its burghers for the purpose of assisting the Transvaal Boers, and how the Free State passed a unanimous vote of sympathy with President Kruger and his Government after the Jameson raid.

The Bloemfonteiners are very vain and very envious. Politically, they are the first people in all South Africa, whilst artistically they take precedence of all the capitals of Europe. A singer with a European reputation would visit Bloemfontein to find herself most unfavourably compared with some local nonentity, whom the Bloemfonteiners had, in their vanity, raised to the position of a celebrity—a Bloemfontein celebrity, of course.

Comparisons, it is said, are odious. True, they are sometimes unfair and frequently ridiculous; but it is only by going to Bloemfontein that you can get an idea how really odious, unfair, and ridiculous comparisons can be. It is not, however, enough for the Bloemfonteiners to say they have local talent which is far superior to anything Europe can send, but they, when they have seen European talent, profess to express wonderment that Europe could see anything in it, and European critics are told with all the bumptious impoliteness of which Bloemfontein is capable, that after this expression of opinion European critics must hide their diminished heads, and remember with shame till the end of the chapter that Bloemfontein has pricked the bubble of artistic reputation, which they in their uncritical judgment had helped to inflate.

That Bloemfontein contains some nice people, who probably daily regret that their lot is cast in such a place, goes without saying; but, like the pearl in the oyster, they have to be searched for, and you would probably have to open many oysters before you came upon a single pearl. All that is blatant, self-assertive, and disagreeable is so much to the fore in Bloemfontein, that the modest, retiring elements of the population stand but a poor chance of being noticed.

President Reitz[1] is both an able man and a gentleman, and I much regret that, owing to his absence in Europe, I did not have the pleasure of making his acquaintance. He is an entirely different stamp of man from President Kruger, who—but of this in another chapter.

An official announcement tells us that—

"The climate of Bloemfontein has long been known for its salubrious properties, and it has for many years been visited by invalids in search of health."

But, in spite of its claims as a health resort, Bloemfontein struck me as the last place that an invalid with any hope of life should be sent to. When I was there, the salubrious properties of its climate must have taken a holiday, for then it was

[1] Since resigned, to the great loss of the Orange Free State

a veritable hot-bed of influenza and low fever, and the invalid in search of health would in all probability have found death. I nearly found it, and I am not an invalid.

Bloemfontein, after all, may not be a bad place to die in; but then, I take it, one place is as good as another for that purpose.

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT I THINK OF JOHANNESBURG[1]

A CERTAIN peripatetic orator on the stump recently described Chicago as a "pocket edition of hell"; and another globe-trotter, apparently impressed with this simile, in an effort of would-be smartness, called Johannesburg a "pocket edition of Chicago." For my part I fail to see where this latter simile comes in. I know Chicago and I know Johannesburg, and the likeness, in pocket edition form or otherwise, between the golden city of South Africa and Porkopolis certainly does not strike me. If anything in the pocket-edition line, Johannesburg is a printed-in-Germany pocket edition of London.

[1] This chapter speaks of what I thought of Johannesburg when I was there. Much has happened since then; but with imperfect information before me, I do not feel warranted in offering an opinion upon the action of its inhabitants during the recent crisis. The reader will see that in writing of the situation in Johannesburg some time before the outbreak I had anticipated the stirring events of last month.

Everything is London in Johannesburg—the shops, the goods, the dress of the people, the thoughts of the people, the very slang of the people; all must have a London up-to-dateness. Any one who does not know his London does not, in the eyes of Johannesburg, know very much. Johannesburg looks to London for its news, its fashions, its amusements—its very salt of social life. It knows what is going on in London just as well as Brixton does—and in some instances a great deal better. Your Johannesburger talks of running over to London in much the same way as a resident in Shepherds Bush speaks of taking the early morning 'bus to the city. The fact that there are several thousand miles of land and sea between Johannesburg and the capital of the British Empire is a mere detail with your up-to-date Johannesburger, who, in thought, is always in London, and seizes every possible opportunity of being there *in propriâ personâ.*

But "so very English" though Johannesburg is, not a little of it is of the "made-in-Germany" species. The trail of the Teuton—especially of the Hebraic Teuton—is distinctly visible—on the Bourse, in trade, in society, in fact everywhere. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that

the greatest wealth and enterprise are to be found in the German-Hebrew community. Your Johannesburg German-Hebrew is, as a rule, above everything an Englishman and a Londoner; but his *Sprache* frequently persists in giving him away, although it is little short of marvellous how readily, and in some measure naturally, he changes the skin of the bear for that of the lion.

I don't know how, in point of numbers, the Jews compare with the rest of the inhabitants of Johannesburg; but I should imagine it is the one town in the world where they, in the upper grades of social and financial life, are in a distinct majority. Indeed, is not Johannesburg frequently called *Jew*hannesburg? Apropos of this, a Hebrew friend of mine told me the following pathetic story: "No," he said, with a sorrowful shake of his head, "I didn't do anything in Johannesburg. I went, as I thought, early enough, too; but when I got there I found the streets already thronged with members of my race, and a synagogue in course of erection. 'This,' I said to myself, 'is no place for me;' and so I packed up my things and returned to where I knew I should have a better chance."

Perhaps he was right; and yet every Jew who

goes to Johannesburg seems to do well. He invariably finds an opening for his talent and enterprise, somehow or other; and what properly-constructed Hebrew is without talent and enterprise? But that is another story.

Just as every Sydney man asks you, the moment you have stepped on shore, what you think of "our harbour," so every Johannesburger's first question is, "What do you think of Johannesburg?" This question was propounded to me immediately I left the train, on arriving at the Park Station, from Kimberley. It was a cold, raw morning, and I would much rather have had a more inviting question put to me. I explained that I had only that second arrived, and that, so far, I had had no opportunity whatever of judging what the place was like, but that later on I would unburden myself upon this point. With this my questioner affected to be satisfied. The same question was served up, on my arrival at the hotel, by a man I met on my way to the bath-room; at breakfast by the waiter; and by at least half-a-dozen hotel loungers whom I encountered on leaving the breakfast-table. I, in fact, never got away from that question all the time I was in Johannesburg; and I am not away

from it even now. I scarcely ever meet a man, who knows I have visited South Africa, who does not ask me what I think of Johannesburg. They will ask it me, I expect, when I am translated to another world.

Johannesburgers do not put the question by way of introduction, or by way of passing the time, as we in England talk about the weather; it is put, in the majority of instances, in all earnestness. For the Johannesburgers are proud of their town, and like to talk of it, and to know a stranger's opinion of it too. One can well understand this, considering how the place has risen, almost in a night, as it were, out of nothing. The stranger who ventured to publicly say that he didn't like Johannesburg, and that he failed to see anything to boast of in connection with it, would have a very bad quarter of an hour. He certainly wouldn't like Johannesburg after those who heard him had done with him. But then no one ever does say he doesn't like it or doesn't see anything in the place, when he is on the spot; he reserves the utterance of all the unkind things he may think until he is safely home again. Then the Johannesburgers, if they happen to read what he says, begin by saying "fool" with something in

front of it, and ending with "don't let him come here again—that's all." But, as a rule, every one who visits Johannesburg likes it. It is the one place, in all South Africa, you will hear visitor after visitor speak well of. But, as I have already pointed out, and as I shall have to point out later on, there are other places in South Africa besides Johannesburg—not so rich, not so big, not so "real good time-ish" and all that, but still places which have their advantages and their attractions.

I have seen much in my travels of what are called mushroom towns—towns which have had a growth almost as rapid as that of the edible fungus itself; but many of these towns have retained their run-up-in-a-night appearance. This certainly cannot be said of Johannesburg. The town looks new, but it looks substantial; it is a town without a past, but with outward and visible evidences of a future—a town, in fact, that has come to stay, and to increase and prosper in the staying. No other town in South Africa has its substantial appearance of brick and stone. Your Johannesburger despises galvanized iron; nothing less than the best building stone satisfies him. It is easy enough to-day to bring stone and building

materials to Johannesburg, but picture the difficulty of it all before it had railway connection with the south! Every stone, every brick, every bit of wood and iron had to be brought up by bullock-wagons, a long, weary, and fabulously expensive toil, which speaks volumes for the perseverance and "go" of the early Johannesburgers.

That early "go" is with the Johannesburgers to-day; there is no standing still with them; they think they are the most go-ahead people, not only in all South Africa, but in all creation, and they never miss an opportunity of giving outward and visible proof of this belief. Of course, if Johannesburg were entirely in the hands of the Uitlanders —the British pure and simple, and the other immigrants working in friendly alliance with the British—it would go ahead far more even than it does; but the Boer administrator is for ever trying to put a spoke in the wheel of progress. Sometimes he succeeds, and sometimes circumstances are too strong for him; but his action is always irritating, and never by any chance sensible or commendable. Your Boer official hates progress with a far greater intensity than any mediæval devil ever hated the most potent of holy water; he hates everything that the Uitlander does, and

pooh-poohs everything that does not originate with himself. But he never fails to take for his share the first skimming of the milk, which the cow, introduced, fattened, and milked by the Uitlander, produces; and of the corn, which the Uitlander grows and reaps, both arms must first go up to the elbow in the sack before the toiler and reaper is allowed to have his portion. No French *seigneur* of ante-revolution days ever exacted his *droits* with more rapacity than the Boer administrator squeezes what he alleges are his *droits* out of the long-suffering Uitlander. But, again, that is another story.

The franchise question which exercises the Uitlander in the South African Republic, and particularly in Johannesburg, has been worn threadbare by almost every one who has had something to say about South African politics; and I have neither the inclination nor the space to add to the threadbare-wearing process. It will be enough for me to bear witness to the discontent that is expressed amongst the Uitlanders upon the subject, and to express myself as being thoroughly in accord with their aims and aspirations. I have seen enough to satisfy me that the gross injustice under which those who have made Johannesburg

what it is—who have, in fact, made the Transvaal what it is—really labour, and the mulish indifference of the Transvaal Government to the idea that it ought to relieve them of the disabilities against which they so justly declare, cannot go on for ever. It is the last straw which breaks the patient camel's back, and the patience of the Uitlander camel is, I should say, about broken. He will not wait till the last straw is added to his burden; his is not the patience that calmly submits to that kind of loading up; he will break the back of the driver rather than allow his own back to be broken.[1]

Have you ever seen a camel turn vicious? I have. And I have noticed how quickly the brutal driver, who has been goading it whilst it has struggled on under the weight of its burdens, gets out of its way. The date at which the Uitlander will turn vicious seems not far off, and then?

A man who takes upon himself the mantle of prophet generally ends in proving what an ass he has made of himself; but there is no need to prophesy in this matter. The handwriting is

[1] The intention of the Uitlander camel was in this direction, but he has been tricked into submission, and the driver for the moment has again the whip-hand of him.

upon the wall as clear and distinct as the printed Biblical quotations which hang in the Boer's bed-chamber. It is to be read by all who can read. Will the Boer driver get its meaning into his sluggish brain, or will he be blind as well as deaf to the signs and portents which are everywhere around him?

"Against stupidity," sighed Schiller, "even the gods fight in vain!" If this be true of the stupidity of the average mortal, what is the view of the gods with respect to the stupidity of the unspeakable Boer? His is a stupidity that Schiller, who knew mankind, too, never even dreamt of.

But enough of this for the moment. Boer stupidity, like Boer arrogance, can only be taken in homœopathic doses. It is too strong an irritant to be taken otherwise.

To tell you what I think of Johannesburg in a sentence would not be possible. Mine would not, at any rate, be the pen to write that sentence. You have already gathered that I like Johannesburg, and that I, in all probability, have no end of kind things to say about it. But I shall, in the course of this chapter, have a few other things to say besides. That is unavoidable. One could put in several weeks in Johannesburg

without either feeling dull or out of the world—a depressing feeling which overcomes most of us when forced to stay very long in a Colonial town. There is almost a daily stream of comings and goings between Johannesburg and England, and the comings always bring with them the latest from the capital of the Empire; and so what is not of first importance, and cabled over at the moment, is pretty certain to be retailed by word of mouth within a few weeks at latest of its happening. Indeed, one frequently hears in the club at Johannesburg what has happened in London society before even the average Londoner would know much, if anything, about it. I don't mean the sort of thing that gets into the papers or the police-court, but that which gets into neither; the little tit-bits of information and gossip which society so dearly loves to know something about. So many people from South Africa go into exclusive English society just now, that they there pick up floating bubbles of scandal and gossip which never come within the immediate reach of those who—at home—are not within that charmed circle.

Most, if not all, Johannesburgers are ready story-tellers, and the practice they have—for

Johannesburg society dearly loves a good story with a *soupçon* of scandal about it—makes them practically perfect at the game. This is what makes Johannesburg society so vastly entertaining; you are certain of hearing the latest *on dit*, the newest scandal, and the most fetching after-dinner story. Johannesburg has ransacked the whole world for its best and brightest in the after-dinner story line. Your very newest and best will, ten to one, turn out to be but a very ancient chestnut; and you will be left to the sad reflection that what might tickle a West-end club in London would, in all probability, provoke a chorus of rejoinders to the effect that it was generally understood Queen Anne *was* dead.

In its sparkle, in its inconsequent flippancy, Johannesburg society has something Parisian about it. Society doesn't mean one half what it says; but it says that half remarkably well. And, after all, the sparkle and flippancies of society should never be taken seriously. If any one were to do this in Johannesburg he might fancy he hadn't a single true friend in society. You see, in Johannesburg one knows another so well, his or her history, peculiarities, and faults—nothing can be hidden very long. It's a small family,

and whilst the oldest thing against you is never forgotten, the newest thing makes the round of the circle almost as soon as it is discovered. This applies equally to the good thing, although Dame Rumour in Johannesburg, as elsewhere, is not quite so quick in putting on her seven-league boots to spread it around.

"Society," a popular dramatist tells us, "is tolerant;" in Johannesburg it is particularly so. There is not the mere shutting of one eye on the part of Johannesburg society to what goes on in its midst; it, as a general rule, goes the whole hog of shutting both eyes. Nevertheless, although the optics are discreetly closed, there is, all the same, a wagging of the tongue, not maliciously, and seldom censoriously, but merely as a sort of spice to everyday conversation.

As I have said, every one, more or less, knows the history of his neighbours, and if he doesn't he generally knows some one who does, and affects the knowledge of that some one. So it is the easiest thing in the world to become acquainted with the full past, present, and probable future of every one you are brought in contact with. All this comes of the very superior knowledge possessed by one man about another; but, in spite of this, it is not

always strictly accurate knowledge. And wisdom accordingly lies in not accepting off-hand the individual opinion of any one, respecting this or that person. In no place in the world is it more necessary than in Johannesburg to take a man as you yourself find him. Men have got into the habit of speaking disparagingly of each other without pausing to think of either the justness or expediency of such disparagement. It is often done jocularly, and sometimes out of a desire to be smart. But it is not a nice habit all the same. It is all very well in the family circle—and Johannesburg society is more or less a family circle—but outsiders are apt to mistake mere pleasantries for incontestable truths.

If, for instance, I met B whilst in conversation with A, B might afterwards say, "What, you know A? Don't you know he ought to be doing 'time'?" And then A later on would say, "Why, I saw you drinking with B this morning. I am surprised at that; if ever there was a man who ought to be doing 'time' it is B!" These little remarks about those whom I met, varied with the information that C had done "time," and that D would be doing it before the year was out, at first led me to the belief that I had got into a

peculiarly fishy, although highly-diverting set. But this question of doing "time" was, I afterwards discovered, but a mere figure of speech, and not necessarily uncomplimentary. Indeed, I frequently found A, B, C, and D drinking most cordially together, although, according to the frequently-used figure of speech aforesaid, each one ought to be in a place where a benevolent Government supplies persons with all the liquid refreshment they are deemed to be in need of, although not of the strength and variety they may desire.

Of course there are people in Johannesburg who ought to be doing "time." What place exists without those who come within this category? As soon as a community has taken unto itself a church and a "pub," it has to busy itself about thoughts of a lock-up; for by that time more than one will have qualified himself for incarceration therein. One has, therefore, no right to be too exacting about Johannesburg, where many of the "crooked sticks" of Europe have—having left their country for their country's good—found a resting-place. But with the "crooked sticks" have come the straight; and, on the whole, Johannesburg is a fairly sound bundle—far sounder and more

polished than any similar mining community I have yet visited.

In England the popular idea for a long time has been that Johannesburg is a place somewhere out in the desert — somewhere between Timbuctoo and Zanzibar, the exact spot doesn't matter — where people live in tents and wear laced-up flannel shirts and slouch hats — and, of course, use atrocious language. The public has gathered from London newspapers—which really ought to know better—that these tent-dwellers and laced-up flannel-shirt wearers are engaged in digging for diamonds! Just as Kimberley is engaged in mining for gold! Now and then they see it correctly stated in the Press that Johannesburg is the centre of the greatest gold-mining industry in the world, and that it is Kimberley that is the centre of the diamond-fields. This causes them to become even more mixed. Nothing, I suppose, will ever convince the general public that Johannesburg, whether it be a gold-mining or a diamond-mining centre, is other than a conglomeration of tents, with here and there a wooden or brick shanty thrown in, with a crowd of picturesquely-attired miners busily engaged in stringing some one up to an improvised gallows, or eagerly scanning the

latest copy of the "over-half-a-million" weekly. They have seen it in pictures about other gold-mining camps, and what the British public sees in pictures in a recognized organ of public opinion it believes.

Some people open their mouths with wonderment when you tell them that the camp stage and the laced-up flannel-shirt stage has passed, and that Johannesburg is a town with houses and shops, and streets and public buildings that would put to shame many an important English provincial town with a charter dating from the reign of Queen Elizabeth. It would seem impossible to them that the Johannesburg of their fancy contained inhabitants who dressed better, talked better, and knew far more than many of their most enlightened cities. But so it is. Up-to-date in everything, Johannesburgers are above everything up-to-date in the matter of clothes. Both men and women have the latest—the very latest fashions; for the most part they know how to dress, and they dress accordingly. Here and there you will find a man over-dressed and a woman under-dressed, but not more so than you will find during a stroll in Piccadilly, or at a smart dinner-party in Mayfair. It is generally the

non-British element which is guilty of the over-dressing; the Oriental love of flashiness and finery which is in them must come out of them, wherever they may be, if they have the means of gratifying it. In Johannesburg most of them have the means, and accordingly out it comes.

Johannesburg is famous for its hospitality—its charming little lunches and *petit soupers*. The stiffness of the old country has no place at these social gatherings; that has all been left behind by both hosts and guests. Johannesburg people have the faculty of making you feel quite at home; they may, and probably will, "talk you over," when you have departed, just as they talked over those who have gone before you; but, bless you, there is no particular harm in it, it is a way they have. Be ye eligible for canonization, then even ye shall not escape being "talked over"—in Johannesburg.

Speaking of dress, you will find more people in evening dress, and a more brilliant display of jewels and toilettes, in a Johannesburg theatre than you will find in a similar place of amusement in a city in England ten times its size. Johannesburg is very Londonish in its taste for elaborate evening dress, and the theatre is the common

ground for the public display of it. This display is frequently the cause of much heart-burning. Mrs. A feels crushed for a week if Mrs. B outdoes her in the matter of a new gown, whilst Mrs. C will positively refuse to be comforted if Mrs. D's new diamonds are finer than hers, and will know no rest until she is herself provided with something even finer.

In London, if we see a pretty woman in a box with a splendid display of diamonds, we ask, "Who is she?" or maybe, "What is she?" In Johannesburg they drop all such preliminaries, and plainly ask *where* did she get them from? And rumour supplies the *where*—sometimes correctly, but as often incorrectly.

In a country where there are more men than women, and men who make a point of signifying their friendship — platonic and otherwise — by presents (or the offering thereof) of diamonds, such questions are not unnaturally asked. I believe they would be asked of Cæsar's wife if she found herself in a box at the Standard Theatre, wearing a few of her husband's birthday gifts.

Whilst in Kimberley no one seems to care a single jot about adorning himself with diamonds; in fact, not one of the De Beers directors wore a

single stone, so far as I could see. In Johannesburg, with the smart set, he or she who is adorned the least with diamonds is anything but adorned the most. With this set, diamonds are the outward and visible sign of much wealth, a lavish husband, or a sympathetic friend. I suppose it was the fine display of brilliants that caused a leading London paper the other week to refer to Johannesburg as the "town of diamonds."

In another chapter I shall deal with Johannesburg as a "show" town, and there will be no necessity to here refer to its tastes with respect to amusements. It will be enough to say that the Johannesburgers know how to amuse themselves the whole seven days of the week; they liberally reward and gratefully appreciate those who succeed in helping them to do so, whether it be in a secular way in the theatre, during the six working days, or in the matter of sacred concerts, at the Wanderers', on the seventh.

The country round about Johannesburg is not particularly inviting, and the roads are execrable; this adjective may also be applied to some of the by-ways in the town itself. There are more ruts in the small streets in Johannesburg, with greater capacities for suddenly dislocating one's ankle,

than can be found in any streets and lanes, the same width and length, the wide world over. I hope, the next time I visit the Golden City, to find either these ruts filled in, or entirely new roads made, for I have anything but pleasant recollections of the twists my ankles were subjected to on the last occasion I was there.

In a few years, when men who are now bachelors take unto themselves wives, and the sisters, cousins, and aunts of others come out to reside in Johannesburg, society there will wear a more settled aspect. As it is—save in a few instances—society only lives for the hour, the week, or the year at most. But all this will change in time, and Johannesburg will become as much a residential town as Cape Town. It will never, I take it, be so decorously slow and so full of the proprieties as the capital of Cape Colony; but it will in the course of years become just a little more matronly, and not quite so tolerant. Its mercurial elements will, however, always be with it, and much that is bright and go-ahead—which can have no place in other South African towns on account of the surroundings and temperament of the people—will be found there.

Of course I was taken over the gold-mines; Colonel Rhodes was my pilot, and he did his best

to make everything clear to me. But I must confess to having been so much confused with crushings and tailings, the banket formations and the cyanide process, that I scarcely knew where I was. I suppose one requires to be an expert—or a buyer of mining shares—to be able to fully appreciate and understand the workings of a gold-mine. I am neither.

I had hitherto always pictured gold in the shape of nuggets, or in visible streaks in a lump of quartz; this is how I had seen it in Australia and in America. But when I was shown lumps of white stone, with greyish, almond-shaped discolorations in them, from which the gold was said to be extractable, I began to wonder if gold might not, after all, be extracted from mill-stones, or even cucumbers. I had seen nothing like this banket formation before, and yet, whilst visible gold-reefs may peter out in a week, this is the sort of unpromising-looking stuff out of which payable gold can be squeezed till the end of time.

That all that glitters is not gold, I have known since I wrote in my copy-book; but I only learnt when I was in Johannesburg that what looks like a rock of sweetstuff is gold-bearing.

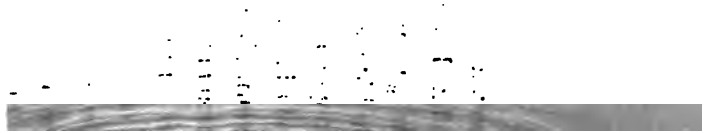
After the gold-mines I "did" the prison, over which

I was taken by that exceedingly good fellow Dr. Cecil Schulz. Prisoners in Johannesburg Gaol seem to have anything but a bad time of it; although, I take it, the ought-to-be-ins take every opportunity of remaining outside of it, thus frequently upsetting prophecy and disappointing the earnest wishes of their friends and acquaintances.

CHAPTER IX

WHAT I THINK OF DR. JAMESON

WHAT I think of Dr. Jameson is what every one who knows him must think too, and were I called upon to name the most lovable man among my pretty extensive circle of acquaintances I should unhesitatingly say Dr. Jameson. Until his deeply-to-be-deplored raid in the Transvaal, no one had a bad word to say of the Administrator of the Chartered Company; indeed, he was the one man connected with South African affairs of whom nothing but good has ever been said. He was built in a different mould from the rest; and even those who have been none too particular in their dealings with South African ventures have been loud in their admiration of his financial probity. Dr. Jameson has ever been honest, irreproachably honest, in all his dealings; and there is no man in all South Africa who has shown such complete



DR. JAMESON.

indifference in the matter of money-making as he has. With his chances he might have been an exceedingly wealthy man, but South African financiers have been lost in wonderment at the opportunities he has neglected, and of his strong disinclination to make the most in the money market of the unique position he has held. For one so thoroughly in the know he has made comparatively little. As one of our most prominent South African millionaires, who has a great personal admiration for Dr. Jameson, said to me some months back: 'I never met such a man as Jameson; he doesn't care a straw for money. While those around him are making their thousands, he makes practically nothing. He won't even pick money up when it's placed before him." To which I answered that it seemed a pity there were not more public officials in South Africa like him. "A pity!" replied my millionaire. "I think him a downright fool about money matters; for no one will thank him. But any one who knows him knows what he is, and he doesn't care about anybody else."

Perhaps "Dr. Jim" has been a downright fool, but there was honesty in his folly—Quixotic, maybe, as the times go, but still honesty of a most

exalted order. Dr. Jim has ever been somewhat Quixotic, and this phase of his character has been entirely lost sight of in estimating the reason of his recent disastrous action. When Cecil Rhodes asked him to co-operate with him in Charterland, Jameson had a splendid practice in Kimberley; he was not only thought most highly of there, but his fame as a master of the healing art had spread far beyond Diamond Town. He threw up a brilliant career for what might have been a deplorable failure. The fact that he had a certainty—one of the very best of certainties—in hand, which he was sacrificing for an uncertainty in the bush, did not for a moment weigh with him. He was fond of Rhodes; he believed in him and his big ideas, and he threw in his lot heart and soul with the man whose thoughts were in continents.

Rhodes is never likely to forget this; Rhodes can never forget this. Stern, cold, hard man though the ex-Premier of Cape Colony is said to be, there has ever been and will ever be a soft corner in his heart for the old friend of his Kimberley days. There is also a soft corner in the heart of every Kimberley man for "Dr. Jim."

It is only those who know Kimberley who are aware of the great love in which he is held there.

There is not a Kimberley man who would not have shed the last drop of his blood to have saved their idol from death, or to have avenged him had Paul Kruger caused him to be executed.

It says much for the character of Dr. Jim for him to have so endeared himself to the miners of Kimberley; but they know his real goodness of heart. They are all acquainted with, while many have personally experienced, his kindness, and so he has crept into their hearts, and there he remains. He was held, too, in similar love in Charterland; and one can, knowing this, readily understand his men taking their lives in their hands and following him in his march to Johannesburg.

Dr. Jim ever had the knack of uttering the soft word which turneth away wrath; in this he was like the late Sir John Macdonald, Prime Minister of Canada. In many ways he resembled Sir John, especially in the matter of converting a hostile deputation into a group of friendly supporters. I have known men full of their real or fancied grievances going in to Jameson like so many raging lions and coming out like so many simpering lambs. He had an unequalled faculty for managing men. The secret during his recent administration in Charterland lay alike in his strong sense of

justice and his uniform politeness. Every one who had a grievance, or fancied he had, knew that Dr. Jim would listen to him and would treat him fairly. No matter who the complainant was he never treated him curtly or unjustly: this naturally went far to make up his popularity in Charterland, apart from the charm of his manners and his well-known kindness of heart.

But the Quixotic spirit that ever was in Jameson has led to his undoing. I deplore this undoing. In a little while we shall know as much of the truth as ever will be known in this world of the causes which led to his luckless raid. Whatever one may think, it is but fair that one should wait till then before passing judgment upon him. For my part, much as the action he unhappily took is to be deprecated, I cannot find it in my heart to censure him. I understand him, and I think I understand the true cause of that course, and in coming to a decision about a man's action there is everything in the understanding. But those who do not understand him have condemned him—maligned him. He has failed, and there is no room in this world of ours for failures, and no pity for those who fail.

CHAPTER X

WHAT I THINK OF PRESIDENT KRUGER[1]

WHAT do I think of President Kruger? Well, listen. In expressing my opinion of him I do not, of course, ask that every one should agree with me. Every unprejudiced person who reads this can take my opinion of President Kruger for just what he thinks it is worth. Those who have already formed an adverse view of the President may find in what I have written not a little to confirm this view, whilst those Krugerites who, out of thankfulness for past favours, or in hope of favours to come, deem it a sacrilege to even criticize their somewhat exacting patron, can anathematize me to their hearts' content. I

[1] Recent events have in no way caused me to alter this, my original opinion of the President of the South African Republic; they, as a matter of fact, as the reader will see in the concluding chapter, have tended to more strongly confirm them.

expect it of them, President Kruger will expect it of them, and it is only to be hoped that our expectations, taken from different standpoints, will not be disappointed.

The language of the subsidized Kruger press in dealing with those who do not grovel at their master's feet is always strong; in this case it should be lurid. I am really looking forward to extending my knowledge of cuss-words from a perusal of the notices which the "reptile press" of the Transvaal will publish concerning the, in their eyes, damnable heresies I am about to utter. A Kruger organ on the war-path is, I can assure my English readers, more instructive than a slang dictionary; in fact, no slang dictionary has yet been published which contains some of the tit-bits of vituperative vulgarity in which these organs of public opinion (!) indulge in dealing with those who may politically differ from them.

But to return to President Kruger. It is an age of Grand Old Men, and there is no country without one. Mr. Gladstone is the G.O.M. of England; Bismarck the G.O.M. of Germany; America's G.O.M. was Oliver Wendell Holmes, as Victor Hugo was France's; Spain's is Sagasta; Russia's was Giers; Italy's is Crispi; Australia's is Sir

Henry Parkes, and last, but not least, Boerland's is Kruger.

I have met most of the world's G.O.M., and they have, one and all, been really great; but it remained until I had the honour of meeting Oom Paul for me to discover that Boerland's Grand Old Man had nothing in common with their greatness. Since that time, I have been trying to discover how Paul Kruger arrived at the position he holds, and how he became the power in the land that he undoubtedly is.

Success in life lies in knowing how to make use of first chances, and Paul Kruger certainly made use of his first chances. There is, moreover, this much to be said: As in the land of the blind the one-eyed man is king, so in the land of the Boers has it been possible for Oom Paul to become President.

Paul Kruger came into prominence at the time of the annexation of the Transvaal; and twice he went to England as one of the Boer envoys to lay the alleged grievances of his countrymen before the Secretary of State for the Colonies. In 1880 he formed one of the Triumvirate with Joubert and Pretorius. For more than a year those three patriots ruled the newly-formed Transvaal

Republic—until an intrigue made Kruger President, Joubert Commandant-General, and forced the less fortunate Pretorius to retire into private life. Since then, Kruger has sat tight in the Presidential chair, absorbing his many thousands a year salary, and saving in addition a bit out of his "entertainment" allowance. By this time he must, with his land, his commercial interests, and his ready money, be an exceedingly rich man.

Oom Paul has none of ex-President Reitz's culture or refinement, and absolutely nothing of his *savoir faire*. Physically he is anything but attractive. His mental gifts are said to be remarkable, but they do not disclose themselves to the ordinary observer. He, I will admit, has a good deal of natural shrewdness; but it is an animal shrewdness nevertheless. His much-vaunted courage, again, is animal. Very much is made of the splendid pluck displayed by President Kruger in the years gone by, in whipping out his knife and cutting off his left thumb—which had been shattered whilst out shooting—without waiting till surgical aid could be obtained. That it was highly courageous none will deny, but it was the instinct of the animal—the trapped animal which gnaws itself free—that prompted him to do it.

In dealing with Paul Kruger, one has not to deal with an ordinary man, and in considering him psychologically, one has to analyze him as a being apart. His ascendency over his fellow-men is very much akin to that obtained by Rudyard Kipling's Hathor over the denizens of the jungle. It is purely an animal domination; and with a people in whom animal instincts and animal courage predominate, that domination is not so remarkable after all.

With the Dopper Boers, their Oom Paul "can do no wrong"; but, as I shall show later on, he frequently does, from a political standpoint, the exact opposite to what is right.

But before dealing with President Kruger politically, there is much to be said about him personally.

What struck me most about him was his want of refinement and general slovenliness. One has, perhaps, no right to expect too much in this direction from Paul Kruger, but one does expect something more from the President of the South African Republic, with a salary of £7000 a year and "allowances." With £20 a day, a man, living rent free, can at least dress decently and still have a bit over for such luxuries as pocket-hand-

kerchiefs. But President Kruger is the worst-dressed man in all South Africa. I fail to see why he should get himself up like a funeral mute; but, even if this be his taste, there is still no reason why his woeful garb should not, at least, be decent in appearance. The dust of Pretoria does, I will admit, take a good deal of the shine out of black clothes, but clothes-brushes are cheap, and the President should by this time know something of the cleansing properties of benzine.

President Kruger may be satisfied with his personal appearance, and his faithful followers may be of the same mind; but, all the same, I do not think it reflects any great credit upon the distinguished position he occupies. In the old days, Paul Kruger, as became a free and unsophisticated Boer, used to go to bed in his clothes: and, to judge by appearances, his earlier habits have not been altogether forsaken. He, moreover, is said to deem a pocket-handkerchief a superfluity. Apropos of this a lovely story is told. When his Honour was about to visit the Queen, it was intimated to him that at Windsor pocket-handkerchiefs were more in use than coat-sleeves, and so a stock of cambrics, to the number of six, was laid in. On his return to Pretoria—so the story

runs—the President paid a visit to the store from which the handkerchiefs had been purchased, and handed back four of them—unused—with the remark that he had no further use for them.

In spite of his natural shrewdness, Paul Kruger is preposterously superstitious—a superstition begotten of ignorance.

When I was in Pretoria, representations were made to the President that he should have his thoughts read. The suggestion threw him into a paroxysm of rage, and it was some time before he recovered from the exhaustion consequent upon the use of an extensive vocabulary of epithets more or less uncomplimentary to me. On calming down, he, with that natural knowingness which distinguishes him, proceeded to give reasons why I should not read his thoughts. His mind was full at the moment of important State secrets; and how would it be if, having read them, I communicated them to Mr. Cecil Rhodes? No, the thing was not to be thought of; apart from the wickedness of the whole affair it was not politic. He would keep his thoughts to himself, and I could go—elsewhere.

Seeing that the President stubbornly refused to see me as a reader of thoughts, it was suggested

that he might be disposed to receive me as a traveller, who in the course of his travels had met many rulers of States. At first he objected to this, for he failed to see how the man could be separated from the thought-reader; but, at last, his curiosity—and all ignorant, superstitious men are curious—got the better of him, and he consented.

I drove up to his house and took a seat in the small reception-room. Presently the President, attired in his suit of black, a huge Dutch pipe in his mouth, and with his chimney-pot hat on—although a lady was in the room—entered. My friend, who was to make the introduction, introduced me. The President gave me a limp hand, which he instantly withdrew, from fear that contact might give me a clue to his thoughts.

Then he sat down, still with his hat on. After smoking at his pipe for a few moments he took off his hat and copiously expectorated in a spittoon by his side. Not a word of welcome or otherwise did he utter. There he sat in silence, with his eyes averted.

"For heaven's sake," whispered my friend, "say something to the old man." In the family circle Paul Kruger is always referred to as the "old man."

I said something in English, but the "old man"

continued his expectorations unmoved. I had a cut in with German with a like result, and, after a few words in the best High Dutch I could piece together, I gave up the idea of a direct conversation with his Honour the President as a bad job.

"Let me speak for you," whispered my friend.

"Certainly," I replied.

"What shall I say?"

"Oh, tell him I am very pleased to have the honour of making his acquaintance."

This, I presume, the President took as a matter of course, for he did not deign to make any reply.

"What next?" whispered my friend.

"Tell him I think Pretoria a pretty place and the Government buildings very fine, and that I am not a little astonished at seeing such a town blossom out of a wilderness in so short a time."

This was translated to him, and the reply was a series of grunts, punctuated with expectorations.

And so the one-sided conversation went on, my friend conveying my messages to the President, in Boer Dutch, and the President with Boer grunts replying to them.

It was only when he was asked what he thought of London that the President condescended to make any verbal reply. Even then, to me, it was

unintelligible; the words began somewhere low down in the throat and ended in the spittoon. As interpreted to me it meant "Not much!"

I may say, in parenthesis, that the Boer language is not a melodious one. The words seem to be exceedingly difficult to get off the chest, and I don't wonder at those who have much to say having frequent recourse to the spittoon.

During the interview, a son of the President popped in and out, but took no part in the conversation; then his grandson, a highly intelligent lad, who spoke English, came in. *Vrouw* Kruger —Tanta Sanna—who, I was told, was "tidying up," did not put in an appearance.

It was suggested to the President's grandson that I should make an experiment with him in order that the "old man" might have an idea what thought-reading was like. But this the young man strongly objected to; for, just before I had arrived, his grandfather had warned him against having anything to do with the damnable thing. As a matter of fact, the "old man" had got an idea that I might in some roundabout way get at his own thoughts through his grandson—a method of reasoning which his grandson, although he did not wish to be experimented upon in the

"old man's" presence, was far too intelligent to adopt.

In answer to questions as to the President's daily habits, the grandson—speaking for the President, who wrapped himself up in a chilling silence, broken only by the pitpat in the spittoon, and the rasping sound of his coat-sleeves drawn across his face—informed me that the "old man" went to bed at eight o'clock and got up at five. On my replying that I, as a rule, went to bed about the time he got up, and got up about the time he went to bed, I got the first smile that had illumined the President's stolid countenance. It was more of a knowing leer than a smile; still, it was something to have broken the monotony of that depressing stare. That leer said as plainly as words: "Just what I expected from a person such as you; the wonder to me is you go to bed at all. In the darkness of the night, when all God-fearing, honest people like myself are in bed, the devil and all his imps are most wide-awake." Then he looked at his grandson as much as to say: "There, Peter, you see how right I am to have nothing to do with such a man!"

Peter passed the look off, and continuing, told me that, although his grandfather went to bed so

early, he frequently got up in the middle of the night, when rendered sleepless by affairs of State, and came to the room we were then in, to think out matters.

President Kruger may have a very active brain, and may devote the whole of the day and a good many hours of the night to State business, but, all the same, I found him to be a most uninteresting and boresome old man.

After half-an-hour, during which the only words I had got out of him were that he didn't think much of London, I took my departure. On my rising he seemed quite glad—almost as glad, perhaps, as I was myself to get away—and he gave quite a sigh of relief as he shook hands at parting. The hand-shaking at the last was of quite a different character to that which had marked our introduction; then, as I have said, the hand was limp and quickly withdrawn; but this time it had almost a heartiness about it. Its pressure said: "Read me now if you like, and you will discover that all I am thinking about is the extreme pleasure I feel at getting rid of you."

But, curious to the last, the "old man" followed me with his eyes, as if seeking for the cloven hoof and forked tail, until I had taken my seat in the

carriage outside. As I drove away, I caught a glimpse of him peering cautiously from behind the door. He was evidently determined to see the last of me, and this seeing the last of me gave him, I am sure, considerable personal satisfaction.

Despite his humble origin and general ignorance, there is nothing humble about President Kruger. He is, in fact, an exceedingly vain man; not vain of his personal appearance—that, at least, would be wanting—but vain of being Paul Kruger. It is hardly enough for him that he is President of the South African Republic; he wishes to be an autocrat, as autocratic as the Tzar of all the Russias. Against this assumption of political power the more enlightened Boers have for some time past been in open revolt.

What a sad falling off all this is from the Paul Kruger of the old days, the days anterior to 1880, when his hopes were with his barns and flocks, and the "love of freedom"—of which one has heard so much in connection with the Boers—had not materially developed itself! Even in 1881, when that degrading Convention, wrung out of the English, made him President of the Republic, he had, as compared with now, but small ideas of his personal greatness. Then he was but an

instrument in the hands of the Lord to work out the salvation of his people. His idea of power was to pose as the patriarch of a purely pastoral and Biblical community, whose chief objects were the multiplication of themselves and their flocks. In this *rôle* he of course hoped to do well for himself, as a matter of course; but he had no dreams of the kingly allowance, and the other good things of this earth, that he was afterwards to handle. He looked forward to a peaceful old age, with the certainty that the Almighty would not overlook him when his time came to bid good-bye to the vanities of this wicked world. And now! Well, he, in his opinion, is more an instrument of the Lord than ever, and, as such, he is all the more entitled to the good things of this world—and the next.

President Kruger, thinking himself perfect, is yet willing to allow a modicum of perfection in his fellow Boers, especially those of his beloved Rustenburg; but the Uitlanders are one and all lost souls. In his eyes, a Boer, no matter how bad, is a brand that has a chance of being at the last moment snatched from the burning; but with him a Uitlander has no chance whatever. He would seem to think it his mission in life to make

PRESIDENT KRUGER.

the lot of the Uitlander as hard and as difficult as possible; anyhow, he does all he can to make it so. And what would President Kruger have been —where would the South African Republic have been, without the Uitlanders—without the Uitlanders' money and enterprise?

It is all very well for President Kruger to assert that the South African Republic could do very well without the Uitlander. This is his cry to-day, when the sorely-tried Britisher has helped to fill the Government treasury, and at the same time the unsophisticated Oom Paul's own pockets. But it was a cry of another kind eleven years ago, when he wanted British help and British gold.

But with the Krugerites one knows how he is always right, and how every one else who does not agree with him is accordingly always wrong. One thing, no man is so impatient of criticism and indifferent to advice as President Kruger.

I was in Pretoria when the President, from the balcony on the Government buildings, made his public promise of burgher rights, *plus* monetary rewards, to those members of the contingent who had been commandeered in the cruel and infamous campaign against Malaboch. The unfortunate men believed him, and the reptile press belauded the

Grand Old Man's generosity and sense of justice. But I would like to know how many of the men who had been forced to take part in a war in which they had no concern, and who returned to find themselves out of work and homeless, have had the President's promises realized. Some of them, I know, in their despair took their own lives rather than wait upon the pleasure of this most Christian Government.

This commandeering business was a shameful thing—shameful to the British race, and shameful to the British Government for allowing it; but of this and many other things in connection with the Boers in another chapter. A few more personal items about President Kruger and I have done for the present.

Although Paul Kruger, the beloved Oom Paul of the pure, freedom-loving Boers, aims at Republican simplicity in all things, unto, as I have already pointed out, his personal get-up, he at times dearly loves to pose before his sycophantic admirers in all the grandeur of his scarf of office, and his foreign decorations. The pompous figure he cuts on such occasions is excruciatingly funny. Fancy, if you can, a venerable patriarch of a rude unlettered people, with all the manners of the veldt strong

upon him, in shiny broad-cloth and equally shiny chimney-pot hat, posturing as a Chevalier, or a Knight Grand Cross! Picture this Nature's perfect gentleman, with his breast loaded with stars and crosses—and not a single pocket-handkerchief about him!

I have endeavoured to convey some idea of President Kruger's peculiarities, but a complete list of his *gaucheries* would fill far more pages than it would be either necessary or profitable to devote to them. One little *gaucherie*, however, stands out quite apart, and, as it is too good to be omitted, I will squeeze it in.

Some time ago his Honour accepted the invitation to open a new synagogue at Johannesburg. After the usual preliminaries, he, to the amazement of the Chosen who were there assembled, announced in his loudest tones—

"*In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, I declare this building open."

After this, the curtain.

CHAPTER XI

WHAT I THINK OF THE BOERS

IN England old superstitions die hard, and the superstition which still finds place in the mind of the average Englishman with respect to the Dopper Boer of the South African Republic will take a lot of killing. He is pictured as a gentle, honest, unsophisticated creature, overflowing with lofty patriotism, and oozing godliness from every pore. He slew our kith and kin, it is true; but it was all done out of love of country, love of liberty; and it was good in the sight of the Lord—and of Mr. Gladstone.

That is how we have been taught to look upon the Boer in this country; and, frankly, I think it about time the grossly flattering and entirely misleading picture was taken from the wall, and a more accurate, if not so pleasing, portrait of him hung in its place.

There may be very nice Boers in the Transvaal —some who come well within the ideal picture specially painted for the British and continental markets. But I may say at once, that the Boers I have met on the veldt, in the trains, in the wayside towns, and in the head-quarters of their government—Pretoria—taken as a whole, have not favourably impressed me. Occasionally, of course, I have come across an exception to the general rule.

Every nation, it is said, has its good qualities, some slightly more than others, some less; but, although I have seldom failed to discover these good qualities amongst the various nations of the earth with whom I have, at different times of my life, pitched my tent, I have not yet discovered exactly wherein the good qualities of the out-and-out Dopper Boer really lie. They are doubtless there, but I did not strike them. Perhaps I did not study the Boer long enough; but it seemed to me, at the time, that I had studied him sufficiently long. One cannot go on for ever with a task that in its pursuit is as barren as it is uncongenial, and which promises in the end to yield no satisfactory result. It seems to me that if you know one Boer of a class you know the whole class—

and that in a very little while. They are all cut out of the same wood, and are as much alike as one Windsor chair is like unto another Windsor chair.

The Boers are the Windsor chairs among the people of the world—homely, durable, and clumsy. There is nothing artistic, nothing high-class about them. A few have been polished a trifle more than the others, and bear traces of the varnish with which they have been thinly coated, but one need not even scratch the varnish to see what they are made of. The shape is always there, and that gives them away. It would be just as futile for a Windsor chair to try to pass itself off as a finely-moulded and gilded salon chair of the time of Louis XV., as for a Boer to attempt to get himself accepted as a European.

But as the vulgar-minded Windsor chair, in its rough-and-ready clumsiness, doubtless fancies itself vastly superior, both in build and capacity, to the more elegant salon chair, so does the conceited Boer fancy himself far and away above the more cultured European. The Boer firmly believes that he and his are the very salt of the earth—God's chosen people in fact. And his angels' world is entirely composed of speaking likenesses of his

relations and friends who have gone before. Whilst he, in a seraphic state, will twang the harp and develop the longest and whitest of wings, the *verdoemde Engelschman* will, in company with the other wicked people of the earth, be toiling and groaning in the nethermost pit. The average Boer takes considerable comfort from this thought.

The Dopper Boer knows his Bible well. With the exception of the market reports it is his only literature. From the time when he first commenced trekking he has carried his Bible with him, together with his gun and as much powder and shot as he could carry. The Bible has been for his own guidance and consolation ; the powder and shot for that of the Kaffir. He takes the Book literally, and glories in the smiting hip and thigh of supposed enemies of the Lord. But, those who have had to be smitten have possessed substance to be despoiled of, and the smiting has accordingly been good in the Boer's own eyes as well as those of the Lord. The Dopper Boer strictly observes the Fourth Commandment, I believe. No manner of work goes on, during the Sabbath, within his gates. But whilst he is listening to the mournful strains of the cheap

harmonium, on the Sabbath, his mind is busy over the plans for to-morrow, especially those which contain the possibility of besting his neighbour. There is a good deal of outward religion about the Boer, but the real inward and spiritual grace is, I fear, very frequently lacking. However, people who write books seldom dip beneath the surface, and so it has gone forth to the world that the Boer, as seen by them, is a marvel of unadulterated piety.

A good deal of the Boer's "faith" is the outcome of crass stupidity. The maxim that "God helps those who help themselves" has no place in the pious Boer's creed, unless it has reference to helping himself to what belongs to others. Almost every one has heard how the Boers dealt with their locust plague. I need not repeat the details. One can understand the aversion of the patient Hindoo to destroying animal life; for may not the flying bug, which he reverently fishes out of the soup it has spoiled lest it may drown, be the reincarnation of his mother-in-law? But the Dopper's aversion to dealing with the locust pest, as it ought to have been promptly dealt with, I cannot understand. Maybe these God-fearing Doppers were animated by the pious wish that the locusts might

lay waste the lands of the ungodly Uitlander alone, their own crops being in the hands of the Lord. But locusts, when they are hungry, do not, I take it, notice these fine distinctions; and the crops of the ungodly and the godly are alike laid under contribution.

The Boers are as nomadic in instinct as the Red Indians; they are never really happy except when on the trek. Now, whence comes this roving instinct? The Dutch, from whom the Boers have mainly sprung, are slow-going and proverbial stays-at-home. The wild, restless blood is not in their veins, and the spirit of discontent is not for ever troubling them. The Dutchman of to-day, so far as one can judge by pictures and writings, is an exact reproduction of the Dutchman of centuries ago—patient, industrious, plodding, and scrupulously cleanly. But the Boer of to-day is very unlike the Dutchman—especially in the matter of cleanliness—and yet he is exceedingly like his ancestors who first peopled Cape Colony. How comes it all?

The only explanation that seems at all feasible is that the Netherlands sent out to South Africa, in the first instance, the crooked sticks, the wild blades, who had little in common with the rest of

their people. Some of them may have had a dash of Spanish blood too, and this would, in a measure, account for the latent cruelty which, in the majority of instances, has place in the constitution of the latter-day Boer. The Dutch are a kindly people, and at no period in their history has cruelty been a marked characteristic of theirs. The fusion later on with Huguenot blood will account for much of the political discontent which characterized the Dutch colonists—the ancestors of the Transvaal Boers—even when they were under the Dutch Government. The fact that the Boers were animated by the same rebellious spirit and impatience of governmental restraint—which, later on, displayed themselves under British rule—when they were subjected to the Dutch powers, appears to be generally forgotten. Those of the Dutch colonists who remained behind in Cape Town (and what is now Cape Colony) may have been first cousins in name with the malcontents who went on the trek; but in blood and in thought they can have had but little in common. One can, however, trace the likeness between the Dutch Cape Towner and the Dutchman at home, and this goes far to convince one of the truth of my theory that the trekkers came of a different stock.

The trekking spirit—save with those who find comfortable livings in and about the larger towns —is as strong amongst the general run of the Boers as it was when they crossed the Orange and Vaal rivers. It is a pity they cannot trek in a body to some quiet spot in the heart of Africa, where, surrounded by a sort of Great Wall, they might be left to develop themselves after their own hearts. As it is, they are a drag on the wheel of progress. They will neither march with the times nor—as far as they can prevent it—allow others, worthier than themselves, to do so. The Dopper Boer can give points to the proverbial dog-in-the-manger. But the funniest part of the business is, that the Dopper will solemnly assure you that he would have developed the gold-mines of the Rand without the aid of the Uitlander. Where the necessary knowledge, energy, and money would have come from are elements which apparently do not enter into his calculation. If the Rand had not been taken in hand by the Uitlander, it would practically have remained as undeveloped as when the Kaffirs roamed there at their own sweet will. There might have been a little casual surface mining, and a collection of rude huts, but, through Boer enterprise alone,

there would have been no Johannesburg, and no general or scientific working of the richest gold-fields in the world.

It is the Uitlander, and the Uitlander alone, who has created Johannesburg and developed the Rand. The Boer has sat by and watched with pipe in mouth each successive stage of development, and has the while laid the flattering unction to his soul that he might just as well have done what they have succeeded in doing. But he didn't. And, as a matter of fact, he *couldn't.*

The Dopper Boer is a narrow, envious creature, and the superiority of the Uitlander irritates him beyond measure. Even when the Uitlander orange is in his hand ready for the squeezing, he squeezes it with a scowl. It is a great personal satisfaction to him to squeeze the last drop of juice he can get out of it, but he is always tormented with the thought that he might have grown the orange himself.

The rapaciousness of the Boer in office equals that of an official Turk, whilst his corruptness, as a general rule, is far in advance of anything ever dreamt of by the wiliest Oriental. It is said that many of the little wars, in which the Boers are periodically engaged, have been mainly due to the

treatment which chiefs, accused of rebelling against the Government, have received at the hands of the officials with whom they have been brought officially in contact. These chiefs—to put it shortly—have practically been goaded into rebellion. From what I gathered, whilst on the spot, whenever there is any question of the payment of taxes by a chief, and the chief affirms that he has already paid, whilst the officials to whom the said taxes should have been paid declare they are unpaid, the truth is invariably on the side of the chief. I would much rather take the word of a raw Kaffir than that of a Boer official. The corruption in governmental circles is well known to every one living in the Transvaal, and, in their dealings with the Kaffirs, the representatives of the Government have ample opportunity for gratifying their corrupt inclinations. It is simply monstrous that the unfortunate chief who has already rendered unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's should be treated as a rebel, and declared war against because he declines to pay twice over. One can understand, however, the desire of the agents, who have been guilty of peculation of this kind, to have the protesting Kaffir stamped out. War covers up the trail. Besides, there is loot to

be got out of the Kaffir who is to be stamped out.

The Boer, as a rule, values the life of a street cur higher than that of a Kaffir. His treatment of the subject race is simply infamous. He has but one method of earning the gratitude of his black servant, and that is by beating him on every possible occasion. The Boer beats the Kaffir when he goes to bed, so that he may not forget what is in store for him when he gets up in the morning; in the morning he beats him again, so that the lesson may last him throughout the day.

It is difficult to convince the British public that the Boer is cruel; they picture him, Bible in hand, spreading civilization and God's truth without a thought of personal aggrandizement. Time after time reports of Boer cruelty toward the subject blacks reach England, but, alas! they are not generally believed, although they are absolutely incontrovertible. If anything comes from Turkey, in the shape of atrocities, we accept without hesitation every word as Gospel truth, and at once declare that, if the Turk cannot be mended, he must be ended. To me, knowing as I do Turkey and the Armenians, and Boerland and the Boers, this straining at the Boer gnat and unhesitating

swallowing of the Armenian camel is all the more extraordinary. The Boer must be ended; there is no mending him. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who I feel sure, from what I know of him, means to do the right thing in South Africa, as well as in the other colonies, appears, curiously enough, to be unable, so far as the Boers are concerned, to distinguish a statement of facts from facts. Do I understand that he will only believe what he sees with his own eyes? In such case we shall, I fear, have to wait a very long time before the cruelty of the Boers is brought home to him. Perhaps he will believe me. He knows that I am in the habit of stating things as they are, as I know them to be, and not as I have been told they may be. Here, then, are my facts.

I was in Pretoria when Malaboch and his people were brought in captive at the conclusion of the campaign. With the exception of Malaboch, who was kindly permitted to ride in a wagon, the unhappy captives were driven like so many pigs into Pretoria. I say driven advisedly, for the *whip was used* by the way. There they were, footsore and bleeding, half dead with hunger and fatigue, marched into the square for the burghers to gloat over, and for that "man of God," President

Kruger, to rave at when he took up his position on the balcony of the Raad House. A more degrading, a more loathsome spectacle, I have never witnessed. There was Kruger, there were the yelling, fiend-like Boers, delighted at the misery of the wretched savages they had conquered. After Kruger had delivered himself of a specially unctuous speech, and his "loyal burghers" had discharged several blank cartridges, the wretched captives were driven out of the square and bundled into prison, *where several of them died, as a result of the treatment they received, almost immediately on their arrival.* How many died on the way will never be known.[1]

These are *facts,* not mere statements. Why should these miserable men be whipped and paraded in the streets of Pretoria, for the glorification of Kruger and the Government of which he is the head? This sort of thing may

[1] Since writing this chapter, I hear from Pretoria that of the chiefs and followers of Malaboch who were imprisoned, waiting their trial for high treason, about a half of them have been allowed to die off like rats. Some of those who remain alive are said to be rotting of scurvy, and that they are denied proper medical attendance. The Government has apparently been afraid to put these poor wretches on their trial, so they have allowed death to claim them—death by lingering, hideous disease. How much more merciful it would have been to have hanged them off-hand.

have been understandable in the days of pagan Rome. But what would Mr. Chamberlain say to such a thing happening in an alleged Christian country—a suzerain State of Great Britain? He is a just man, a Christian man; and I know that, had he been with me on this occasion, he would have felt as I did. He was not—unfortunately—and the irrefutable cruelty of the Boer has not been brought home to him as it was to me. But I hope he will accept me as a truthful, unbiassed witness.

The Malaboch campaign was a crime, and it was carried out by the Boers with a savagery that was a disgrace to any people calling themselves Christians. They dynamited the poor wretches, cut off their water-supply, and used fire as a means of driving them into submission. Is this warfare in accordance with the usages of civilization? Is it what one has a right to expect of "Christian" people? It is what the Boers did, and what was right in their eyes.

I wonder if Mr. Chamberlain is aware that the Malaboch captives were, at the conclusion of the campaign, sold into slavery amongst the loyal burghers of the Transvaal. The Boers do not call the poor creatures so acquired "slaves" but

"bondsmen." They are nevertheless as much slaves as were the niggers in the Southern States before the War of Emancipation. The slave-owners of the Southern States, too, were angels of goodness as compared with the Boer bondsmen-holders.

We spend millions in putting down slavery in different parts of our empire, and Exeter Hall is periodically filled by a crowd of earnest men and women, met to sob over and protest on behalf of the victims of the Arab slave raids. Have these good people no sob left, no voice of protest remaining, for the equally sad victims of Boer oppression?

The commandeering of Britishers in the Transvaal is now a thing of the past. It never ought to have been possible. But, when I was in South Africa, the game of commandeering was going merrily on. British subjects were forced to go and fight in the wars provoked by the Boers, wars in which the British had no sort of concern. They had to find their own horses, provisions, and ammunition, and received no pay. Their businesses and professions might go to the dogs during their enforced absence; that was no concern of the Boer press-gang. They were ordered and they

had to go to assist in a war of extermination, to countenance the Boers in their cruelties.

We learn at our mother's knee that "true-born Britons never shall be slaves." But they were in the South African Republic a little more than twelve months ago, for the enforcing of their services was little short of slavery—and in a most unholy cause. Taking this and other acts of oppression into consideration, can it be expected that the British Uitlander should have any great love for the official Boer?

CHAPTER XII

WHAT I THINK OF PRETORIA

IN the preceding chapter I dealt with my friends the Boers; in this I deal with the place where the Boers most do congregate. Pretoria is the Parliamentary head-quarters of Boerdom, and, as such, is deserving of a chapter all to itself.

For a South African town it is what one might call pretty. The trees give it a fresh, and, to use a guide-book expression, a "picturesque" appearance. It is, of course, not so "towny" as either Johannesburg or Cape Town, but it is London as compared with the capital of the neighbouring Republic, Bloemfontein. It has some fairly good streets, and some really fine stores. It has, however, in parts, an exceedingly ragged appearance, wild nature and the efforts of civilization being mixed up in a manner that irritates the eye. It, in fact, occasionally gives one the impression that bricks and mortar must

frequently have run short. Perhaps the gentle Boers used all they could spare in the erection of the Raad buildings, which are the most imposing of their kind in South Africa.

In spite, however, of their imposing appearance, they look very much out of place in a town like Pretoria. They make the town look top-heavy. One would imagine that within its walls were conducted the affairs of an Empire, or at least a decently important kingdom, instead of the parochial politics of a one-horse and vassal Republic. But the vanity of the political Boer has no equal amongst any people in any part of the world. With him, the South African Republic is the greatest Power in either the Eastern or Western hemisphere, and the representatives sent to the Parliament at Pretoria are the greatest politicians the world has ever known. And, session after session, they exercise their great talents by legislating upon subjects which a vestry in England could well think beneath its notice. Upon, I presume, the principle that all work and no play makes even Boer Jack a dull boy, these heaven-sent legislators, in the pauses between the handling of these momentous questions of State amuse themselves by vilifying each other.

The process reminds me of an exceedingly angry raven trying to eject a bone that has stuck in its throat. The Boer *taal* is not pretty at its best; in its harshness, it makes one feel thirsty; but when a volley of "cuss-words" is let off in your presence, with all the force that a Boer on such occasions can employ, you wonder at the tongue that is capable of such an effort and the throat that can bear the strain. I have no wish to do the Pretorians—some of whom I really like—an injustice, for I was in Pretoria at a time when the town was flushed with the pride of conquest and free drinks; but quite a number of them gave me the impression that "cuss-words" formed a most extensive portion of their vocabulary. It is true that Boer Dutch, when spoken quietly, has a "cuss-wordish" flavour about it, and a stranger might well mistake a pious ejaculation for something distinctly profane; but I have, alas! heard oaths in all languages, and this distressing familiarity with these figures of speech enables me at once to tell when a man, of no matter what nationality, is really swearing. I used to think the Red River *voyageur* had no equal for luridness of speech; but in Southern Spain, where the choicest and most out-of-the-way Oriental pro-

fanities are judiciously blended with European expletives, I found my volatile companions of the Red River had to play second fiddle. And I discovered after some intercourse with the Boers, that they, when the mood was on them, were far in advance of even the Southern Spaniard. A Boer chain of expletives would make even a Chinese idol desire to stop its ears.

A Boer, however, is seen at his best in this direction when he is driving his team of oxen into or out of Pretoria. Every flick of his long-tailed whip is accompanied by an equally long-tailed expletive. It is sad to think what an ordinary team of oxen in Boerland must know in the way of profanity. Frankly, I don't think it is fair to them to have knowledge forced on them in this manner. Just as the Egyptian donkey-drivers call their steeds after well-known public characters, the Boer driver names his oxen after friends or enemies. Those who unfortunately happen to be named after the latter get most of the lash; for your Boer is a humorist in his way. No team is considered complete without its *verdoemde Engelschman* (d——d Englishman); and the beast selected for this unhappy distinction is generally the poorest-looking and the most stupid of the lot.

The *verdoemde Engelschman*, as a matter of course, can never do right; he is either too fast or too slow—there is always something wrong with him—and so he gets the whip. In this way does the modest and gentle Boer display his feelings towards us.

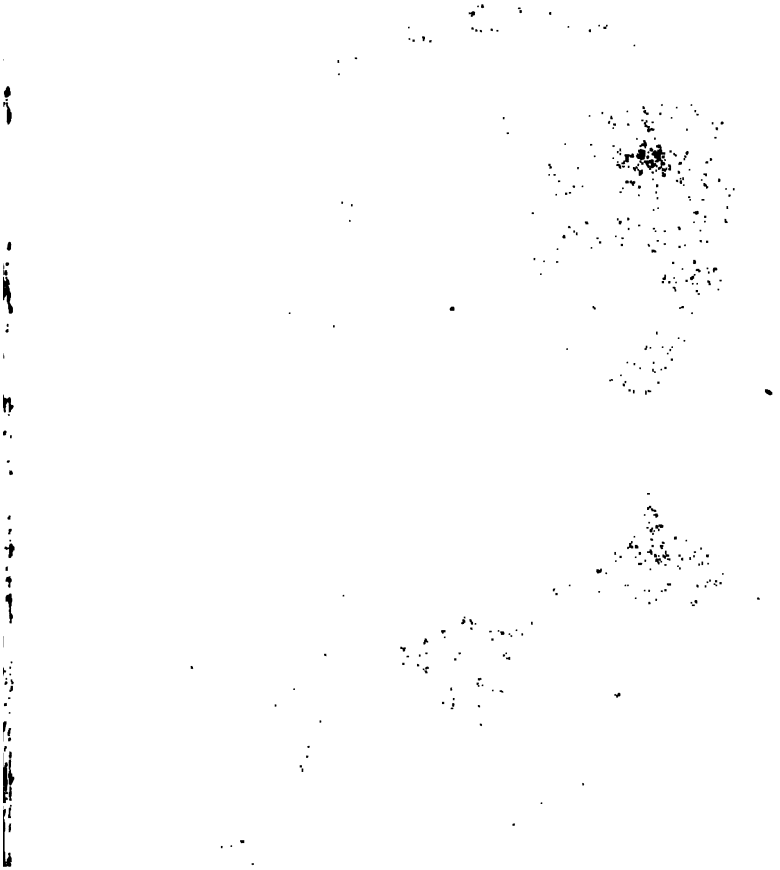
Outside the Raadzaal, Pretoria has nothing in the way of "sights" to show, except the *wonderboom* (wonder tree) and the reservoir, both some distance out of the town. But you are not considered to have "done" Pretoria until you have visited both.

Pretoria is an un-English-looking town—very much so. But from a picturesque point of view, this cannot be reckoned against it as a disadvantage. The inhabitants too—that is, in wartime—are in the main picturesque; but for the greater part they are also un-English in appearance. One would like to see more of the British and less of the Boer type in Pretoria; and certainly more of the British way of thinking in daily life. There is, as a general rule, a straightforwardness about a Britisher's thinking, as well as a directness in his speech; but the Boer has a tricky way of thinking. I noticed this, in more instances than one, in Pretoria. In my experi-

ments, I found several "subjects" who would not, even if they could, think straight. I will explain what I mean. I have my Boer who has undertaken to *honestly* think of, we will say, an object. I take him in hand; but, on the way, as it were, for the express purpose of misleading me, he thinks of something else. I, reading his thoughts, at that moment, go to that something else, and he straightway declares I am wrong, and that the object in his mind was the *first* thing thought of. I have, of course, had this sort of thing elsewhere —it is not peculiar to Pretoria; and I have always been content to allow such people to square the deception with their consciences — if they had any.

But what is peculiar to Pretoria is that a man who has wilfully tricked you goes, after the "show," and makes a public boast of it in the highways and byways, thinking it an exceedingly smart thing, and, moreover, actually gets friends and acquaintances to think so too. To trick a *rooinek—i. e.* an Englishman—gives the average Boer the greatest personal satisfaction; and it is sure to elicit the expression of the warmest approval from those of his kith and kin who are informed of it. It goes without saying that all

Pretorians are not tricky; indeed, some of them are as intelligent as they are straightforward. On the whole I liked Pretoria, apart from the events narrated in the last chapter—and I do not for one moment regret having visited it.



CHAPTER XIII

WHAT I THINK OF DR. LEYDS

UNTIL Dr. Leyds essayed his little *coup* in Berlin, his name was scarcely known in this country. Indeed, when the first intelligence of the efforts he was making to win over the Kaiser and the German Foreign Office came into the London newspapers, most people were asking, "Who is Leyds?" He had been sprung upon them so suddenly. Had Dr. Leyds heard these queries how he would have smiled. He, the State Secretary of the South African Republic, and one of the ablest diplomatists in all South Africa, and not to be known? And yet so it was. London knows but little of the Transvaal's public men; its knowledge begins with Paul Kruger and ends there. But Dr. Leyds is really an able man, and it is just this that makes him dangerous. Some time ago I christened him the South African

Machiavelli, and the sobriquet has stuck to him. He has been the one man associated with the Transvaal Government whom Cecil Rhodes felt was worthy of his steel. He has been the one gentleman amongst the crowd of ill-educated burgher politicians by whom the President is surrounded. Rhodes was always distrustful of Leyds, for he never quite knew what his next move on the diplomatic chess-board might be. Oom Paul, too, never seems quite to have trusted him; Leyds has always been a dark horse whose form even the President's peculiar cunning could not make out. Leyds and Paul Kruger have quarrelled violently and often, but it has invariably ended in the astute Secretary of State having his own way. The suspicion probably rankles in the "old man's" mind that, politically speaking, Dr. Leyds is working for his own hand. This suspicion I believe to be well founded. Time will show.

It would be difficult to believe that Dr. Leyds has the cause of either the Boers or the present Boer Government really at heart. He has nothing in common with the Dopper, so dear to the unsophisticated Paul Kruger; indeed, he is as much an Uitlander—save for the rights and privileges denied them—as those settlers in the land whom

he has so actively helped to oppress. He is a Dutch Uitlander, although not a direct importation from Holland. He hails from Batavia, and there is something about him that tells me he has not only Dutch blood in his veins. A touch of the Eastern, a touch of the Semite—what is it? He has absolutely nothing of the Dutchman's stolidity or physical sluggishness. He is very handsome—it is a dark kind of handsomeness—very fascinating, and possessed of simply charming manners. Women are said to find him absolutely irresistible, whilst he invariably succeeds in captivating most men who come in contact with him. Personally I have always found him most agreeable and, at the same time, vastly entertaining company. But, politically, I never trusted him. In my experiments with him I found he was not a man who thought straight: his mind is cast in an Oriental mould. You never quite know when you have got him, and his face is no index to his thoughts. I have known many Easterns with similar mental peculiarities, but seldom a European. This makes me all the more of the opinion that there is just a little something Oriental about him.

It is alleged by those who have given him their support during his residence at Pretoria, that he

is the essence of ingratitude. Maybe gratitude is not one of Dr. Leyds' marked characteristics.

I can quite understand the pose he assumed in Berlin, and how those dear, simple German friends of mine were taken in by him. They would be no sort of match for his diplomatic acumen. He caused them to look upon him as the incarnation of disinterested patriotism, and, so far as I can hear, no one succeeded in seeing through his little game. But the success of Leyds' diplomacy in the German capital is said to have at last alarmed Paul Kruger, whose suspicions perhaps were aroused as to the probability of his playing for his own hand. This, quite as much as Mr. Chamberlain's spirited assertion that the British Government intended to uphold the Convention of 1884 in all its conditions, would cause the wily Oom Paul to be not over desirous for further German intervention.

Dr. Leyds knows that Paul Kruger is getting on in years, and is not in good health, and—but that is another story. Will Mr. Cecil Rhodes tell this story, and other things appertaining to Dr. Leyds' Berlin Mission, when he arrives?

My dear Berliners, how successfully the astute Hollander has duped **you**! He prepared the trap with much skill, and you fell into it. You

don't think so? Well, you will see. You and I have known each other intimately for many years, and you must admit that I know more about South Africa than you do. Had you possessed an equal knowledge of South African affairs plus an equal knowledge of Dr. Leyds, he might not have taken you in; but he has, and more's the pity. It is still more a matter for deep regret that he succeeded for the time being in setting two hitherto friendly peoples by the ears. This, to me, deeply deplorable occurrence is, I know, as much his work as the outcome of Dr. Jameson's raid. And whilst the wily Hollander was playing you for all you were worth, how he must have smiled!

And, Dr. Leyds, you, when you read this, will know how accurately I have read you. You will remember how accurately I read you in Pretoria, and how well we understood each other. So great is my admiration of your ability that I am almost sorry you are not on our side. It is, I know, a maxim with you that every man in the political world has his price. Now, frankly, what was your political price? It is too late now, I know, to do a deal; but you, man of the world that you are, will not, I am sure, be vexed by the suggestion that a deal might have been made with you.

You will remember when I was in Pretoria how it was openly said you were seeking for a post of vantage on the fence which divided the Uitlander from the Dòpper. Will you have gone over bodily to the Dopper? well, the political butter on the bread on that side is doubtless thicker than that you might have received on the other. Anyhow, it must have been pretty thickly spread for you. Paul Kruger may yet live to regret it. With the parsimonious old man it must have gone much against the grain to have parted with so much of the Treasury cash for the purposes of the State Secretary's Continental mission; but from the Boer point of view Dr. Leyds has done his work well, and has made excellent use of what Bismarck would call the "reptile fund" placed in his hands. The only thing that must worry the autocratic Oom Paul is the question whether Dr. Leyds may not, in a political sense, have done more for himself during his mission than he, the first fiddler, may think he is entitled to.

Dr. Leyds may deceive others about his love for this adopted country, but he is far too clever a man to deceive himself. If there were not power, plus substantial rewards, to be got out of the Transvaal, he would give it the go-by to-morrow.

This much is positive. For Dr. Leyds has nothing of Paul Kruger's blind, rugged patriotism; to him, in his heart of hearts, Boerland is not nearly so dear as distant Batavia; he has simply pitched his tent in the country with the one object of doing the very best for himself that he possibly can. I do not blame him. He is a very able man, and ability should have its reward, but he really must not talk so glibly about Boer virtues and British iniquities, and all the other gush so dear to the hearts of Boer sympathizers. It is a part of his game I know, but I don't like to see so astute a man playing such a game. Some electro-plated patriots might under similar circumstances deceive themselves, but Dr. Leyds is not, as I have said, built that way. It is absolutely impossible for him in such a matter to feel what he says, although he will without doubt be able to convince those about him that he feels every word of it. I shouldn't be at all surprised to hear that people believed that his heart actually bled for the gentle, oppressed Boer, for he is an excellent actor, and a convincing one at that. Dr. Leyds is the most dangerous man to British interests in the Boer camp. The real danger lies not only in his exceptional ability but in his persuasive personality.

His success in Berlin has in no way surprised me.

Apart from his highly objectionable political methods, he is one of the most interesting figures in the Transvaal—well educated and a gentleman, and personally I like him.

CHAPTER XIV

WHICH IS SUPPLEMENTARY

HAVING finished with the Transvaal, and before asking my readers to follow me, in my thoughts, to Natal, I propose, for the moment, to hie me back to Cape Colony. Cape Town and Kimberley, it must be remembered, are not the only towns in this vast stretch of British territory. There are other places besides the capital of the Colony and the centre of the diamond-mining industry. Such inland centres as Queenstown and King Williamstown, Grahamstown (the "City of the Saints"), and Graaf Reinet and Cradock, are at least worth a thought. The last-named is famous as a health resort. Then for coast towns there are Port Elizabeth and East London. Travelling from Cradock to Port Elizabeth, one passes through some of the most beautiful and impressive scenery to be found in the Cape Colony. The journey by

rail from the Karoo to Algoa Bay takes you through ostrich-land. Ostriches there are apparently as plentiful as sparrows in London. They dot the broken ground like bushes, and it is astonishing what different shapes they can assume. In the distance, as the train is rolling along, one can readily mistake a fair-sized ostrich, with its head bent down, for a cow grazing; when its body is hidden in the bushes, and head and neck alone are visible, it resembles a gigantic snake. In its walk it has the ungainliness of the Dopper Boer; and the arrogant toss of its head, and the open-mouthed wonder with which it regards things beyond its ken, remind one very much of the same species of humans. Is it that the ostrich has copied the Dopper, or the Dopper the ostrich? Both are given to hiding their heads in the sand, in the full belief that their little doings are thus rendered invisible to the outside world.

The ostrich has the character of being a stupid animal; equally so has the Dopper Boer. The appetites of both are voracious; they swallow everything that comes in their way, without bothering their heads about the principles of *meum* and *tuum*. Just as the Dopper, in his contempt of the iron horse as a European abomination, contents

himself with the jogging and jolting of his bullock-wagon, the ostrich, with arrogance in its eye and a contemptuous toss of its head, pits its speed and endurance against the passing train. When out-distanced, it stops dead and turns tail, with an air of indifference, which says in the most unmistakable manner: "I could have beaten that thing had I cared to, but it was not worth while, and besides, it is meal-time." The ostrich, on the other hand, has its uses; it does give something for the use and benefit of mankind. But of what real use now-a-days is the Dopper?

The pastoral picture of the Kaffir boy doing his day's marketing on the back of the docile ostrich, or turning the open veldt into a sort of race-course, with highly-trained ostriches for steeds, I have not seen. There are pictures which the Argus-eyed travellers who write books of fiction for an ingenuous public alone see. That the ostrich can be ridden, and is ridden, I am of course fully aware; but it does not take any more kindly to the process than would a giraffe. Anything that possesses a back can be bestridden, but the common belief that ostriches are the Shetland ponies of the Kaffir is unmitigated nonsense.

On reaching Algoa Bay one quickly notices the

difference in the climate. The freshness and the bracing air of the veldt are gone. You are, when a hot wind is on, in the region of sticky heat. Walking is then no pleasure, and the climbing of the hill at Port Elizabeth is, under such conditions, a positive torture. The various afflictions which befell the patient Job did not include a climb up this hill, or any similar local hill, under equivalent conditions, otherwise his patience must surely have given out.

Although Port Elizabeth is the best port along this coast, big ships have still to anchor some distance off the jetty, which is reached by means of small tugs. It is often very rough in Algoa Bay, and landing in consequence becomes exceedingly uncomfortable, and at times really dangerous. An unexpected douche in the sea has no particular terrors for me when a boat is nigh. I have had the experience more than once; but a tumble into the waters of Algoa Bay, which are infested with sharks, is a thing I do not crave for. I have the strongest objection to forming the *pièce de résistance* at the shark's dinner-table. I have seen in Port Elizabeth the living portions of those whom the Algoa Bay sharks have elected to spare, and the sight was not exhilarating.

The landing arrangements at Port Elizabeth leave a very great deal to be desired. In the first place the steamship companies should not tolerate landing fees at all. The fare to any port should cover landing charges. Nevertheless, the landing at Port Elizabeth is like alighting from a railway carriage at a London terminus in comparison with the process at East London or Durban, where the passenger is put into a basket cage and swung over the ship's side into a tender below, or, when embarking, drawn up from the tender on to the deck.

It sometimes happens that, just as the cage is on the point of landing, the tender bucks with all an untamed broncho's devilry, and one finds oneself suspended between the side of the tender below and the side of the vessel from which one has been lowered. You feel all the while that you may get caught and pressed out of all recognition. I have seen furniture caught in this way and made sawdust of. The novelty of being drawn up or lowered in this fashion fascinated me, at first, but the fascination soon wore off. Whenever my turn came for entering the cage, the tender always seemed to indulge in an extra mad dance, and my period of suspension in the air was accordingly longer. I used to try and get a nice companion to enter the cage

with me, for there is a certain monotony about hanging alone in mid-air with a raging sea below you; but every nice person on board, intuitively perceiving how it would be with the tender when I approached the cage, stood aloof. On one occasion, when I had to land with two men of Claimantlike proportions, and a very stout lady, burdened with a bonnet-box, a parrot in a cage, and a mewing cat in a hamper, I wished I had never been born. Sometimes the landing is quite out of the question, and whilst you are waiting for the sea to go down, time is given you to select those with whom you desire to be lowered, or failing this, to make up your mind to be lowered alone. Such are some of the joys of coast-voyages.

CHAPTER XV

WHAT I THINK OF NATAL

THE least known of our African Colonies is undoubtedly Natal. The average Britisher would, I verily believe, be unable to tell you off-hand in what part of Africa it was. The only direct communication between the Cape Colony and Natal is by sea ; but within the past month Natal has been connected by rail with Johannesburg. This should mean much to the "Plucky Little" Colony. Many passengers from the south will, I take it, almost prefer the long land journey through Cape Colony, the Free State, and the South African Republic, to taking the far shorter water route of eight hundred miles from Cape Town to Durban, with all the vexatious delays and various inconveniences.

Under present arrangements, the mail-boats from England to Natal, *viâ* Cape Town, and *vice versâ*, stop at Port Elizabeth and East London

for the purpose of taking in and discharging passengers and merchandise. The wait at these ports is not merely one of hours, but runs into days. For those to whom time is no object, this delay may be a matter of complete indifference. For the busy passenger, however, with whom time is money, it makes all the difference.

The landing at Durban, the "water gateway of the Colony," is made under conditions similar to those prevailing at East London, and to which I referred in the last chapter. You have the basket trick over again with its manifold anxieties and discomforts. Durban Harbour is all right when you have entered it. It is the entrance that is the problem. At present, vessels drawing eighteen feet of water find it safer to stay outside. I do not know what is the exact draught of the big liners of the Union or Castle Companies; but I know they have to content themselves with anchoring outside in what is termed the "outer anchorage," but which a land-lubber would term an open roadstead very much exposed to the winds. In this "outer anchorage" they load and discharge their cargoes —and passengers. I myself embarked and disembarked in a blinding, soaking rain. A severe attack of malarial fever was the outcome of the

soaking I received. A Natal rain simply laughs at a mackintosh; it delights in pouring in streams down the neck of a wearer of one, whilst the wind, which is in league with the rain, rips the buttons off as easily as an ordinary English wind whisks a leaf off a tree, and flaps the loose wet ends in the faces of every one around. I am assured that Natal lies outside the tropics; this may be, but I am positive that its rains either have their birth there, or have a blood relationship with those of uncompromisingly tropical countries. The Kaffirs take kindly to these rains, for they provide a most effective spring cleaning. Just as the Lancashire miner takes the early summer excursion train to Blackpool for his annual dip in the briny, so does the self-respecting Kaffir leave his kraal when the first rain comes on, and permit Nature to give him his much-needed once-a-year bath. I dare say those who come much in contact with the Kaffir during the dry season regret that the rains do not come oftener; but in such case, perhaps, familiarity with water would, with the unwashed black, beget contempt.

Natal is called the "Garden Colony"; and, in a measure, it deserves the flattering sobriquet. After the sandy parched-upness of parts of Cape

Colony, the Free State, and the Transvaal, the freshness and greenness of Natalian scenery come as a refreshing change. Natal has real scenery; not that which, for want of anything better, goes in other parts of South Africa by that name. It has mountains, and valleys, and plains, cascades, waterfalls, and all those little pleasing peculiarities which go to make up real scenic effects. It has rivers too, but Nature has not intended them for purposes of navigation; they are much too rapid and shallow for that. They are principally employed in lending a picturesqueness to the surrounding country, and in carrying into the sea as much soil as they can possibly wash away. These rivers might be a little more merciful, as Natal has none too much really good soil; and these rushing, roaring, mountain-born torrents, having the whip-hand, as it were, elect to do precisely what they like. Without rivers, however, Natal would be a land of desolation and unproductiveness. But, by and by, the surplus waters of Natal will, I have no doubt, be taken in hand by man, and used for the purposes of irrigation.

What soil Natal has is most productive; it will grow practically anything that Europe or the tropics can produce—from the common or garden

potato to the delicate tea-plant. Natal tea is excellent; and the only really good cup of that beverage, which is said to cheer but not intoxicate, I came across during my travels in South Africa was served me in Natal from home-grown tea. Natal tea has the colour, and much of the flavour, of what is called Persian tea, with little glasses of which the Hebraic vendors of *bric-à-brac* present their Fehringer customers in the Cairo bazaar. I don't know why Natal tea has not found favour in the English market; perhaps it is sold under another name, like Greek and Levant wines which the conscienceless Frenchman buys for a few centimes, and retails as best Bordeaux or Burgundy at enormous profit. Natal coffee, too, is quite drinkable, even as prepared by the black cook. Served by an expert French cook, it seems to me to offer great possibilities, as it is quite another thing from Boer coffee, which is another story.

The entire population of Natal is something under 600,000, of which some 45,000 are whites, and about an equal number of Hindoo extraction; the rest are made up of various shades of black. The white population are of British, Dutch, and German origin. In the towns near the coast you don't see much of the gentle Boer; he chiefly

occupies himself in sheep and cattle farming in the upper districts. His absence thus gives Durban and Pietermaritzburg a more British appearance than other South African towns of their size possess. In fact, after the strong dose of Boer prescribed in the Transvaal, it is quite a relief to come across something of a genuinely British flavour. Then the presence of the red-coats in Pietermaritzburg is good for the Englishman's eye after the filibustering swagger of the Boer burgher.

Natal has two first-class towns—Durban and Pietermaritzburg—and several small ones. Durban, the port of the Colony, is the largest. Durban society is more commercial than that of Maritzburg; and it considers itself the backbone of the entire Colony. In Durban people talk trade; in Maritzburg they talk army and politics. The military give quite an Indian station aspect to Maritzburg society; the talk with them is the same, the very life is much the same, as out in our great dependency. A little healthy jealousy exists between the two towns—similar to that existing between Liverpool and Manchester. The Liverpool gentleman and the Manchester man of the old country become the Maritzburg gentleman and

the Durban man of the new. But I cannot say the definition is in any way a just one. True it is that the well-to-do of Durban, like the prosperous Liverpudlians, have the suburban instinct strongly developed: they must have their villa in the suburbs; and any one who cannot run to a residence on the Berea is not thought very much of.

On the other hand, Maritzburg people go in for centralization—a centralization which falls well within the shadow of Government House. It is, however, just the Berea heights which make existence in Durban really tolerable: the lower town as a place of residence is, I should fancy, just a little depressing.

The journey from Maritzburg to Durban reminded me of an expanded switchback ride without any of its pleasurable sensations. I can strongly recommend it for a rheumatic patient; the massage is perfect. The road between Durban and Maritzburg is full of engineering difficulties, and it speaks much for the ingenuity and perseverance of the engineers in building a railway round and through those mountains at all. I verily think it would have been fully as cheap to have erected an elevated line on the principle of the New York elevated railways whilst they were about it. One

would then have gone somewhat faster than the pace—about that of an English road-engine—that is at present possible.

Durban, with its climate, its Oriental servants in the hotels, and its club, reminded me somewhat of Ceylon; and the people have a good deal of the planter element about them. They have none of the Johannesburger's rush, but the solemn sturdiness of the Cape Towner has no part in their composition. They are—so, at least, they struck me—an easy-going, good-natured community, and British in everything. To speak quite frankly, I, as an Englishman, felt really more at home in Natal than I did in any other part of South Africa. Perhaps it was because the people tried to make me feel so, or, maybe, it was the complete change from the irritating impressions of Boerland.

Belgium was the cockpit of Europe. Natal has fulfilled the same purpose for South Africa. Its history, from the first entry of the immigrant Boers[1] into the country in 1837, until the infamous Convention following the defeat at Majuba, has been one record of battles and bloodshed. When the Boers were not slaughtering the blacks, or the

[1] Previous to this there were the campaigns of extermination carried on by Chaka, the Napoleon of the Zulus.

blacks doing their best to lessen the number of the Boers, there were conflicts between the British and the Boers, and the result, as a general thing, did not reflect much glory upon the British arms. It is a sad reflection, but it is none the less true. The massacre at Majuba is burnt into the memory of every Englishman who gives the progress of England's little wars a single thought; but the defeat of the British troops by the Boers on the flat at Durban, in 1842, has little or no place in his recollection. And yet Majuba was but a repetition of the Durban fight. The Boers hid behind the mangrove trees, and picked off the red-coats like rabbits. Many of those who escaped being shot were drowned, and when the gentle Boers finally captured the fort at the Point, the principal defenders were hauled by them to Pietermaritzburg, and imprisoned in the stocks. When reinforcements finally arrived by sea from Cape Colony, the Boers in possession of what is now Durban showed but little fight; indeed, at the first volley from the boats into the bush, where those heroic defenders of their national liberty had ensconced themselves, they incontinently fled. The red-coats on landing, anxious to avenge the loss of their comrades, did not even get so much as a shot at them. The

Boer will fight well behind trees or stones, when nothing of him is exposed to view, but he has always had a wholesome fear of meeting the *verdoemde rooibaatjes* face to face.

Instead of following up the rebel Boers and inflicting a salutary lesson upon them, the British authorities contented themselves with hauling down from the Block-house the flag of the "Republic of Natalia," planted there by the rebels, and running up the British ensign in its place. A free pardon was offered the rebel Boers, with the exception of their leaders; this exception meant, however, nothing, as these leaders were never given up, and as a matter of fact the authorities, in spite of offering a reward of £1000 each for their capture, practically took no steps to bring them to justice. Indeed, afterwards, one of their number, Commandant Pretorius, was included in the general pardon, and another, Servaas Van Breda, became a member of the Legislative Council of Natal. The same mistaken leniency, eight-and-thirty years later, caused the rising of the Boers which led to the disasters of Laing's Nek and Majuba Hill. Further mistaken leniency gave these "brave and high-spirited people" another free pardon; handed to them the Transvaal, and made that arch-rebel Paul

Kruger a ruler with powers and privileges practically as great as those possessed by an autocrat of all the Russias.

All this is ancient history; but it is fresh in the memory of those loyal Britishers who were abandoned by Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues, and of the relatives of those men whose lives were lost in the service of their country. In Johannesburg, the present iniquities of the Boer are most irritatingly apparent; but in Natal, the recollections of Laing's Nek and Majuba Hill grate on one's nerves. To be shown, as you are in Natal, by some of these "brave and high-spirited people," British uniforms which belonged to those they had shot, makes one's gorge rise. These blood-stained uniforms, with the bullet-holes in them, hung in their rooms just as the Redskins suspend the scalp-locks of victims in the wigwam.

"See here," will say a Boer, unhooking a uniform from the wall and pointing to a hole in the back, "I shot this one myself; he was but a boy; but that one over there belonged to a full-grown man. They fell at Majuba like so many *wildebeeste*. I was quite tired of shooting;" and, with a sigh at not having more trophies of his prowess to show,

he returns the blood-stained garment to its peg on the wall.

Whilst Durban is a more or less united community, cemented by commercial ties, Pietermaritzburg is one of the cliqueyist towns the world wots of. There is the military clique, the Government House clique, and the old-timer clique. Sometimes these cliques pull together, but as often as not each goes its own way. To be anything at all in Maritzburg you must be in one of these cliques, and to be the surprise of the whole town you must be in all. Only a complete stranger, with no local family ties or service interests, could possibly acquire such a remarkable position.

Durban has some wide streets, some good shops and hotels, and—especially as regards its Town Hall—some fine public buildings. Its club is more like one of the institutions one comes across in India than a Colonial club; it has none of the free-and-easiness of the Colonial institution, and much of the Anglo-Indian formality and ceremony. The Durban people are hospitable, and they take a pride in putting you down at the club and introducing you to the cooking there, which is really excellent. Another marked form of hospitality consists in taking you for a drive and showing you

the natural beauties of the Berea. A drive behind a couple of good horses in a place where the black man is the steed, and the 'riksha is the carriage, naturally means much.

'Riksha riding in Natal is at once convenient, and, as a change, amusing. The Zulu beats the Jap at his own game; he is faster, and on the whole takes more kindly to it. It is true, in that hot Natalian sun, he makes his presence in front more noticeable than does the human steed in Japan; but his natural willingness and gaiety of demeanour are virtues to be considered, even if you have to frequently make use of a liberally-scented pocket-handkerchief. The blacks are a good-natured, simple-minded folk—that is, in the "raw," unconverted state. A "converted" black is, as a general rule, an uncompromising example of complete demoralization. "Conversion" may have given him an inward and spiritual grace, which is not apparent to the eye, but outwardly he is about as worthless and degenerate a specimen of mankind as it is possible to conceive. Frankly, I prefer the heathen as a heathen; he is more honest, more trustworthy in every way than the black mental abortions that a misguided, if well-meaning, clergy inflict upon a long-suffering

community. Ask any one in Natal what he thinks of the "converted" as compared with the "raw" Kaffir. Experience has taught employers of black labour that one of the latter is worth a dozen of the former. Indeed, in most places of business the determination that no converted blacks need apply is as strong as if it were actually printed on a card, and hung up in the premises.

The Natalian nigger (with him, I, of course, include the Zulu) is the finest specimen of the black race; there is a manliness about him that is altogether lacking amongst the black people in the Transvaal. He is better built, of finer physique, and of an all-round nobler character. There is much natural nobility about the Zulu; if you only keep him away from drink and tracts.

The black population in Natal is increasing rapidly, so rapidly, in fact, that the Legislature will have to busy itself with the question as to what is to be done with it. Kaffirs do not exactly take unkindly to work, but their efforts thereat are spasmodic; they want far too much play. The British workman's eight hours a day would mean absolute slavery to them—something like eight hours a month is more their ideal. They will work during those eight hours honestly and faithfully,

but at the dawn of the ninth hour the feeling to do absolutely nothing, beyond amusing themselves after the fashion of their kind, becomes simply irresistible. In the old days war carried off the surplus population; to-day, a benevolent Government makes paupers of them. But what else can it do?

There is not enough work for the blacks to do, even if they were disposed towards it; and the pastime of knocking each other on the head is not permitted. They increase, and they have to be fed; but, at the present rate of multiplication, the feeding process promises to become a very serious matter in the immediate future. It was just because the nigger would not work as the white man thinks he should work, that the coolie was introduced from India; but the Natalian labour employer has begun to look upon the coolie as anything but a blessing. In his heart of hearts, the Natalian prefers the Kaffir to the coolie, and his one regret is, that he cannot get so much out of the former, in the shape of consecutive labour, as out of the latter. The coolie comes to make his "bit," and then to go back with it to his native land; he is all on the "make," and never on the spend, whereas the Kaffir spends what he makes.

Then the docile coolie tells the Bombay trader of the pickings that are to be made out of this land of plenty, and he arrives in Natal and undersells the white trader, remitting his pickings home. All this does not make the coolie labourer or trader in Natal popular.

What is wanted in Natal is more white men—white men with capital to develop the natural resources of the Colony, and to promote manufactures, as well as to give employment to the surplus black population. With the possibilities of such employment, the black *should be made to work;* it is not a question of sentiment, but one of stern necessity. I like Natal, and I believe in it, and I heartily wish Natalians and their country every prosperity.

CHAPTER XVI

WHAT I THINK AS A "SHOWMAN"

IN the past, when itinerant vendors of exceedingly indifferent amusements throve remarkably well, anything in the shape of a "show" was considered good enough for the South African. But all this has been changed, and South Africans to-day are, with respect to amusements, somewhat fastidious; they expect the best, and will, as a matter of fact, tolerate only the best. Large burlesque and musical comedy companies have been brought over from England, regardless of expense, with a repertoire comprising the most recent London successes, and have done far better than they would in any other part of the world. Every South African town they have visited has given them crowded houses, and received them, not only with marked enthusiasm, but with gratifying hospitality.

It does not follow from this that the South Africans worship only at the shrine of comic opera; on the contrary, their love for entertainment is both varied and extensive. The musical comedies, burlesques, or whatever you choose to call these plotless musical fancies which have found so much favour with Londoners of late, have been well staged, and South Africans appreciate the fact. But other high-class entertainments, which have none of the popular elements peculiar to comic opera, have in comparison been equally successful.

Max O'Rell, Foli, Santley, Miss Marguerite Macintyre, Miss Fortescue, and Miss Phyllis Bentley are amongst the star artistes who, during the last season, have every reason to be satisfied with the financial success they have achieved in South Africa.

South Africans, generally, are fond of the drama, and there is no South African town of importance which has not its amateur dramatic society, or, more correctly speaking, those who have taken upon themselves the task of showing the rest of the public how this or that play should be acted. In fact, a dramatic company visiting South Africa would have no difficulty, should the cast, from

some cause or other, be incomplete, in finding competent amateurs to take upon themselves the *rôles* of the absentees. One frequently sees well-known plays put on with a mixed cast of amateurs and professionals; indeed, well-known local amateurs—especially in Johannesburg—would be more likely to make a play a financial success than a company of travelling professionals.

Miss Macintyre, as most people know, appeared with marked success in Johannesburg and Cape Town, with a support that comprised a number of amateurs; not for a few nights only, be it understood, but for a period extending over several weeks, and at prices that the leading London theatres command. What other country could produce a like result in its way?

I say advisedly in its way, for, of course, South Africa as a happy hunting-ground for the showman has its limits, its disadvantages, and its drawbacks. In the first place, there are not many towns in South Africa to show in, but what there are, are worth exploiting; and a good company can stay in the more important towns for a far longer period than it would be able to do in a provincial English, an American, or an Australian town with a far greater number of inhabitants.

The fact is, the South Africans are an amusement-loving people, and the country has not been so over-run with entertainers as at home and in the other Colonies. But, whilst a good entertainment in South Africa can take more money, and stay in each town longer in proportion than in the old country, the question of the comparative expense of running such an entertainment is quite another story. With shows, as with every other kind of business, it is not what you take, but what you make. In populous England, the distance from town to town on a well-organized tour is very short, but in South Africa it takes days, where in England it only occupies hours, to reach the next "stand"; hence the great difference in travelling expenses. Although the Union Steamship Company is exceedingly liberal to artistes travelling by their line to South Africa, and the Cape Government Railways management kindly allows them many concessions over their system, the cost of getting to South Africa and of travelling about there is very considerable. The better part of three weeks is taken up by the voyage to the Cape, and a like time on the return passage, while many days are spent in the railway trains in getting from place to place. All this is, of course,

lost time. One, in fact, is spending money instead of making it. All this has to be taken into serious consideration by the showman visiting South Africa.

On the other hand, companies can in South Africa find a field for their labours when the dead season, with all its staleness and unprofitableness, is at its height in England. The English summer is the South African winter; and many entertainers who have to "rest" during the former, might find it worth their while, instead of "resting," to pay South Africa a visit.

The best months in which to take shows to South Africa are May and June. The rainy season is then on in Cape Town, and consequently, Cape Town is about at its worst. The season should therefore open in Johannesburg, where it is dry and cold; Pretoria, Kimberley, the East Coast towns, and Natal should follow, and Cape Town be taken on the way home. In this way, a tour extending over four months would be made in the pick of South African weather. The rainy season commences in Natal early in September, and Natal is no sort of good for "shows" during its duration. These hints may be of use to those who have in mind the idea of visiting South Africa professionally.

O

My readers will probably like to know, from one who has given public performances in every corner of the civilized globe, how South African audiences compare with those elsewhere. The question has, since my return to England, been very frequently put to me. In South Africa, as in other countries, the character, temper, and intelligence of the audience vary in each town. In Cape Town, with its old-fashioned Dutch element, I found the most intensely respectable and ultra-intellectual audience. Kimberley, with its only too well-known "gods," is a curious mixture of enthusiasm and rowdyism. A critical cuteness is the chief characteristic of a Johannesburg audience, with a pretence of being *blasé;* but it is a good-natured audience all the same—as quick as lightning—and, if pleased, a most appreciative one. It also has the merit of being loyal to its favourites, with a loyalty that no other town in Africa, or elsewhere, can surpass. Natal, especially Maritzburg, gave me my smartest audiences. The Natalians are very English in everything they do; in Natal I saw the best-dressed audience, from an English point of view, I had met in South Africa, and for the first time I felt I was really addressing an audience of Britishers. I like a Natal audience immensely,

and I have every reason to believe that Natal audiences like me.

The coast towns are not without their enthusiasm, and they furnish for their size large and intelligent audiences. Perhaps Port Elizabeth is the most disappointing; it is, as a commercial centre, the second town of importance in Cape Colony, but it takes its amusements somewhat sadly. It, on the whole, prefers music to the drama, and whilst one section of the public has a fancy for the ballet, another thinks a religious discourse, interspersed with magic-lantern effects, a most fascinating affair. For such the legitimate drama is certainly not the thing. For my part, Port Elizabeth gave me highly satisfactory audiences at a time when trade was exceedingly depressed, and the town had been pretty well drained of ready money.

Grahamstown is anything but a good theatrical town—in fact, is it not called the "actor's grave"? It is musically inclined, and considers itself distinctly intellectual; but underlying it all is a somewhat depressing current of "goody-goodiness." The ultra goody-goody will fill a mission-hall to overflowing, and a nice lecture, or an amateur concert in which the character of each performer

is irreproachably correct, comes in for a fair share of patronage; but a theatrical performance is a thing to look askance at, whilst a burlesque, with its short-petticoated dancers, is nothing less than an abomination to be severely let alone. Grahamstown, in addition to being named the "actor's grave," is called the City of the Saints, and I am inclined to believe that the exceedingly pious folk thereof think the description not at all inaccurate. Anyhow, Grahamstown is a pretty place, and the road thence to Heaven may be shorter than from any other town in South Africa; but, all the same, the peripatetic showman occasionally finds it anything but a satisfactory place to get "stuck" in.

In spite of its vast area, and the great distance from town to town, South Africa requires less working on the part of the *impresario* than any other country in the world. News travels fast in South Africa, and a success in one town generally begets one in another. I mean a success financially, not artistically. Opinions differ very much in the various towns as to the artistic qualities of this or that performance. Cape Town and Johannesburg, although so very wide apart in thought and in the composition of their inha-

bitants, generally go together; but Kimberley will question the artistic judgment of both places, while Port Elizabeth and Durban may go even one better in their questioning than either of the others.

Isolated as they are from the centres of artistic thought, the smaller South African towns are very local in their criticisms. No matter how really great the artiste might be, he would have to bear comparison with some local celebrity; upon his own merits he would not be judged. South Africa has been said to be the tomb of reputations, and, if adverse criticism can kill them, then that of the greatest man the age has produced, provided he did anything publicly in South Africa, might find a speedy burial there. But the showman, as well as the politician, must not take the criticisms of these exceedingly critical South Africans seriously; they mean well, if they have not always a nice way of saying what they mean. Nothing pleases South Africans so much as picking somebody else to pieces; it is a way they have, and serves, I presume, to pass away the time, which must occasionally weigh somewhat heavily on their hands. The daily practice makes them, it must

be admitted, remarkably expert at it, and, although the newcomer may at first wince, he speedily discovers, if he be built the right way, that the picking to pieces process is never malicious, and is sometimes even amusing.

He who visits South Africa must take the people as they are, not as he would have had them made. One has no right to expect a London, an Edinburgh, a Dublin, or a Liverpool, with their artistic development in South Africa; but entertainers will find no less enthusiasm, a far greater proportion of patronage, and, I may add, generally speaking, a good deal more natural cuteness than he will find in the mother country.

There are excellent halls and theatres throughout South Africa, and the rents, as a rule, are quite moderate. The newspapers are very attentive, and advertising is by no means dear; the only thing, in fact, for which the charge is high, is printing. On the other hand, as I have already pointed out, a good show can get far higher prices than obtain in England. I have no desire to flood South Africa with shows, and I do not, by any means, advise every entertainer who imagines he is a star to pack up his things and try his luck

out there; but so much has been said by disappointed showmen about the disadvantages and general barrenness of South Africa as a "show" country, that I, who have had some experience of it, feel it but just to tell my readers what I think of it.

CHAPTER XVII

WHAT I THINK GENERALLY

THIS chapter will, as its title implies, be somewhat discursive. I have told my readers what I think of this particular person and that particular place; and now, by way of conclusion, I shall briefly set down the general impressions of my visit to South Africa.

What every one apparently wants to know is, what the future of South Africa will be? As to the immediate future there can be no question. The country is teeming with mineral wealth, and the hand of man is busy collecting it and disposing of it. But when—a few hundred years hence—man has whipped off all the cream, the question will arise as to what should be done with the skimmed milk that remains. Frankly, I don't think the white man will be content with the skimmed milk. He looks to South Africa for the cream;

and when there is no more cream to be whipped off, he will, I fancy, turn his back on the country. Only the future can prove the correctness or incorrectness of this view of mine. The ancients, I am of opinion, took the cream of the gold found in Mashonaland and Matabeleland, leaving to subsequent generations very-much-skimmed milk. There may, it is true, still be cream in plenty in these newly-acquired territories, but, as yet, it is not apparent to the eye of the prospector; and one really begins to think that those ancient workers did not overlook very much.

South Africa is, in the eyes of the majority of those who go out to it, a mineral country; they have nothing to do with its agricultural possibilities; they leave all this to those people and their descendants who were there before the gold fever had its existence. The earth will for years continue to yield up its treasures of gold and precious stones, but, when they are exhausted, what then? Will the vast tracts of country, now knowing but a few wandering specimens of the white man, be peopled with the Anglo-Saxon race, as are California and Australia? I do not think so. The conditions in these unpeopled tracts of South Africa are different from those in either California or

Australia. The Californian soil is altogether more suitable for agricultural purposes than that of South Africa; and this western strip of the United States is fed commercially on all sides. It is not only supported from within but from without.

South Africa exports wool, feathers, and a few other things; but, in a measure, the greater portion of the population depends upon the mining industry. In one way or another it mixes itself up with the business life of every town; in fact, it serves as a commercial pick-me-up. If the diamond output ceased to-morrow, Kimberley would, for a certainty, immediately become a deserted village; there is practically nothing outside of the diamond-mining to give it a *raison d'être.* The same with Johannesburg. Take away its gold production, and the town would be reduced to the necessity of living on its own fat, which would speedily be exhausted. With the coast towns, like Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, it is not quite the same, but a very great deal of their prosperity is bound up with the mining industry. The same may be said even of Durban. The shipments of passengers and merchandise, all more or less connected with the mining industry, give life to

these ports. South Africa in these latter years has, in the main, been depending upon the mining industry and business connected with it, whilst California and Australia (with the exception, of course, of Western Australia) have been devoting their attention and energies to other enterprises.

In California the red man, and, in Australia, the black man, have almost disappeared before the march of civilization; but, in South Africa, the blacks do not disappear. On the contrary, they increase rapidly. They greatly outnumber the whites, and in the future will, at the present rate of increase, practically swamp them. For I do not for a moment believe that South Africa will ever be a white man's country like America or Australia. It is essentially a black man's country, serving for the present and for the near future as a lucrative field for the white man's enterprise. But in the ages to come, what then? Africa may possibly vomit the white man.

A word as to the labour question. Just as in the days gone by the countryman used to think that the streets of London were paved with gold, and that he had but to arrive in the metropolis to fill his pockets with the chippings of those pavements, so has it become an established fiction with

those in the old country in search of fresh fields and pastures new for their labour, that South Africa is a veritable El Dorado for all who can manage to reach its shores. It is time that foolish, expectant people were disabused of this mistaken belief. There is very little room in South Africa for white labour, skilled or otherwise; and most of those who go there without something definite in view run a great risk of meeting with disappointment. There is room in the new places for small tradesmen and craftsmen with a little capital; but in the more settled towns there is practically no room at all. A few practical market gardeners near the larger towns would do well, and so would skilled laundresses; the vegetable supply is at present everywhere indifferent, whilst the washing is simply execrable. There is room also for domestic servants—where is there not in English-speaking places? And they have a better opportunity of marrying well and obtaining houses of their own than a similar class of persons has in any other country in the world.

The labour question is one that is never likely to vex South Africa as it vexes us at home and in some of our Colonies. Trade Unionism is not rampant there, and is not at all likely to be.

There is too much raw black labour ready to hand to permit of the white labourer giving himself unnecessary airs. Australia is said to be "the paradise of the working man," which, interpreted, means that the working man will do as little work for as much wages as he can get, and strike as often as the mood is on him—which it very often is.

Now striking, as yet, has not become an institution in South Africa. Men of the professional agitator stamp would, I expect, find a difficulty in getting anything like a decent living out of stirring up discontent—or in the "organization of labour," as they put in—in South Africa. The reason is that for every white man who might feel disposed not to work there are a hundred black men who would. As Mr. Cecil Rhodes once remarked to me: "There is nothing democratic about Cape Colony; it is cast in an aristocratic mould, and is different accordingly from some of the other Colonies, where pure, unadulterated Democracy reigns supreme."

The black man question is, as I have previously pointed out, one that will be calculated to give South Africa some trouble in the future; but for the present, the black man can be drawn upon for the supply of labour, and, without him, it is

difficult to see how the real hard work of the country could be carried on. I don't think the white man would ever have got much out of the Redskin in the shape of labour, but the black man in Australia might, under a different form of treatment, have been made a fairly useful member of society.

The Australians, however, like the Americans, have gone in for a policy of extermination, and this policy has put out of consideration the question as to how far the aborigines of those countries might have been of service in the labour market.[1] In South Africa a like policy has not been adopted; the black man has been made to feel the superiority of the white man, but he has been taught to believe that he was brought into the world for a purpose beyond that of furnishing targets for rifle bullets.

A word also as to the hotels. Before I visited South Africa I was given to understand that the hotels there were something too dreadful for words. This I speedily found to be a gross libel. True, South Africa does not provide in the shape of

[1] I refer to those parts of South Africa over which the British flag waves; in the Transvaal the one object of the Boers appears to be to fasten a quarrel upon this or that chief and wipe his followers off the face of the earth.

hotels luxuries you find in London and other European capitals, but they, as a general rule, are better than many Colonial hostelries, and in every way more satisfactory than the miserable caravanserais travellers in India have to put up with.

The attendance in the South African hotels is not on the whole good; in fact, it is often exceedingly bad. Many of the hotel bedrooms possess no bells, and if you desire the attendance of a servant, you have either to go out in the passage and shout yourself hoarse, or descend to the bureau to make your wishes known. This, when one is dressed, is no very great inconvenience; but it is distinctly inconvenient when one has to throw on one's things in order to leave one's room to secure a servant's attendance for a simple service. Again, if one is ill, the absence of bells prevents one communicating with the servants, and the prospect of lying in bed for hours helpless to communicate one's wants is not a particularly cheerful one. I have been through it, and from personal experience I know that, in some instances, South African hotels are not desirable places to be ill in. In others, of course, you are attended to as if you were in your own house, for there are many kind-hearted folk keeping hotels. An acquaintance of

mine was once down with fever in a South African hotel, and, having no bell in his room, and no other means of securing the attendance of a servant, used to summon attendance by firing his revolver. His bill, by the time he had recovered, for damaged furniture and broken window-panes, was a pretty large one.

South Africa is strongly recommended by the medical faculty for invalids with weak lungs and chests. Its winter climate is, on the whole, magnificent; but the winds up country are, I fancy, a bit too cold for consumptives. The mistake people, who visit South Africa for the first time, make, is in thinking that the outfit required is akin to what one needs in India. What one travelling up country in the winter really requires is a kit similar to what one would need in Russia. In Johannesburg, Kimberley, and on the veldt, it is at night-time cold enough for furs, and I strongly advise those who intend travelling in South Africa to provide themselves with rugs and fur coats.

I would mention that I travelled to and from South Africa by the Union S.S. Company. For the efficiency of this Company's service I have nothing but unqualified praise, and for the many kindnesses shown me and my party, both on the

voyage and by the Company's agents in South Africa, nothing but sincere thanks. I, who have had much experience in various parts of the world of sea journeys, know the value to be placed upon such consideration. But the consideration shown us is but that shown by the Union Company to every passenger. A man who is once a Union man remains one as long as he travels between South Africa and the mother country.

CHAPTER XVIII

WHAT I THINK OF THE SITUATION

AT the time of writing this, the concluding chapter, the situation in the Transvaal is almost as fluctuating as the prices in the Kaffir market. One hour everything points to peace and a speedy settlement, and the next we are assured affairs present a graver aspect and that complications are inevitable. The fact is, perfectly reliable first-hand information in telegraphic form from the Transvaal reaches us in driblets. The bulk of the news we get comes from Pretoria, inspired by the Boer Government, and I unhesitatingly say that very little reliance should be placed on the telegraphic fiction sent by the Pretoria correspondent. He wires simply what he is "inspired" to wire, and what he thinks will best suit the book of his inspirers. A great authority on the Boers has recently declared that he would not "believe a Boer if he

swore on a thousand Bibles." I wouldn't believe Kruger's creatures, who are responsible for instructing the British public on what, politically speaking, is passing in the Transvaal, if they swore on a million Bibles. We are assured on the authority of this Pretoria creature of Kruger's that the High Commissioner, the Governor of Natal, and all the right-minded folk in South Africa are in full sympathy with the President upon every point.

Did I not know the value to be placed upon this correspondent's utterances, the remarks attributed to the Governor of Natal, and for which his Excellency has been severely censured in the London press, would have considerably surprised me. Frankly, I don't think Sir W. Hely-Hutchinson gave himself away in the fashion he is alleged to have done. I say this with all the greater certainty in consideration of a conversation I had with his Excellency concerning the Boers and their treatment of the Uitlanders when I was in Maritzburg. Did Sir W. Hely-Hutchinson really make use of the words ascribed to him, then he must have very materially changed the views he held with respect to political affairs in the South African Republic some twelve months ago. More than this I cannot say.

It is perfectly sickening to read of Kruger's "magnanimity"; so often is it reiterated that by and by the British public will eventually believe there is something in it. Frankly, I don't see where Kruger's magnanimity comes in. I know my Paul Kruger, and I don't think he, in a political sense, is capable of a genuinely magnanimous act. There is not much magnanimity in handing Dr. Jameson and his companions over to the British authorities. He simply could not keep them in prison, and he dared not take their lives. It would doubtless have given his Doppers great personal satisfaction to have had Jameson and his officers strung up or shot within forty-eight hours of their arrival in Pretoria, but Oom Paul knew that such an act would have been the signal for a race war in South Africa which could have had but one end—the complete subjection of the Boers. By handing over Jameson, Paul Kruger has relieved himself of a great responsibility, and at the same time the Government of considerable expense. Having settled the release of the leaders of the raid, he turned his attention to those against whom a State prosecution offered greater pecuniary possibilities. You may depend upon it that, in spite of the high-toned "Christian principles"

upon which the Boer Government is run, it—Paul Kruger and his "Executive"—in ordering the prosecution of the Uitlander leaders was as much influenced by the possibilities of fat "pickings" as by the demands of outraged justice.

One hears Oom Paul's diplomacy praised all round; but, frankly, I for one see absolutely nothing to admire in it. He has scored, and scored heavily—this much must be admitted; but how has he scored? By a peculiar form of cunning, which his admirers in a certain section of the British press call high diplomacy. Every one by this time knows how the Uitlander deputation which visited him at Pretoria was cajoled, and how instead of Dr. Jameson being included in the armistice, the Boer burghers were massed round Johannesburg and ordered to massacre him and his followers at sight. Having disposed of Jameson, Oom Paul turned his attention to Johannesburg; the inhabitants were commanded to lay down their arms, and this done the leaders were straightway arrested and lodged in Pretoria Gaol.

What simple, trustful folk the members of the deputation who waited upon Paul Kruger must have been! They should have known from past experience the exact value to have placed upon

Boer promises. But they apparently did believe them. Oom Paul out-manœuvred them completely, and the cause of the Uitlander was lost.

A Boer politician is, in his cunning, like unto a wolverine, the most knowing quadruped in all creation. No matter how skilfully the trap is set, or with what tempting bait, the trappers of the Great Lone Land seldom succeed in landing the wolverine. Mr. Wolverine waits till other fur-bearing animals are caught in the trap set for himself, and then quietly proceeds to devour them. The Uitlanders have, it is now apparent, been caught in their own trap, and the wily wolverines of Pretoria are proceeding to devour them at their leisure.

Nothing succeeds like success, and people as a general rule never inquire too closely into the methods by which success has been achieved. The methods adopted by Paul Kruger in bringing about his success are not being inquired into: people accept the results, that is enough for them. The reason why Paul Kruger has scored in each diplomatic encounter he has had with either the representatives of the Uitlanders or the British Government has been that he has started with so much in hand every time. Cunning must be met

by cunning, instead of which we Britishers have always in our negotiations with the Boers been guided by the ethics and forms appertaining to European diplomacy. It therefore has not been difficult for us to have been over-reached. He, I doubt not, has over-reached Sir Hercules Robinson. One has yet to learn the result of the negotiations carried on between the High Commissioner and the President, but I think one will, from what has gone before, be perfectly safe in assuming that Oom Paul, for the present at least, has scored all along the line. We hear much of President Kruger's promises on behalf of the Uitlanders. Wait till the time comes for their fulfilment. President Kruger and his "Executive" will not fulfil any one of the many promises they may have made Sir Hercules Robinson concerning the amelioration of the Uitlanders' condition unless they are actually forced to do so. Upon this prediction I take my stand.

Mr. Balfour has said that the long-promised reforms must be carried into effect without unnecessary delay. Mr. Balfour, I presume, voices the opinion of the British Government, and the British Government will, I take it, put the necessary pressure upon Oom Paul; without this all

necessary pressure the long-promised reforms so strongly commented upon by the leader of the House of Commons at Manchester will be hung up indefinitely.

Had Paul Kruger and his "Executive" carried out their promises there would have been no necessity for either Jameson's raid or the arming of the Johannesburgers. The story of Jameson's raid has yet to be told: we shall not be kept long in suspense. Till the whole tale is unfolded one must keep an open mind upon the subject of Dr. Jim's guilt. I have been told the "true story" of the whole affair from several different quarters, each one differing materially from the other. That there is something in the generally-accepted one having reference to the plans of certain Rand financiers I can authoritatively assert, but their plans or aims in no way affect the just grievances of the rank and file of the Johannesburg Uitlanders. The said financiers seized upon these grievances with the object of creating the psychological moment. Their motives may not have been altogether disinterested, but any plan which had for its object the removal of Boer oppression would, in the opinion of every one fully acquainted with the situation, be perfectly

justifiable. They will be blamed because they failed: failure under such circumstances is always inexcusable.

It goes without saying that the Johannesburg leaders had determined to make one supreme effort to throw off the Boer yoke, and that President Kruger, in spite of his denials, knew all about it, and had taken the necessary steps to crush the uprising. The Johannesburgers knew the new guns received by the Transvaal Government were intended for them, and when Kruger likened Johannesburg to a tortoise whose head when its neck was sufficiently extended should be struck off, they, fearful of being struck before they were ready to defend themselves, sent for Jameson. This is my reading of the matter. Jameson was on the border; he knew, as every one who had given a moment's thought to the situation in Johannesburg knew, that trouble was brewing, and that an outbreak might occur at any moment. He also knew that at the first sign of an outbreak Kruger's "loyal burghers" would shoot at sight. The head of the tortoise was to be cut off, for had not Oom Paul himself said it? It was to prevent the cutting off of the tortoise's head that Jameson, on being sent for, made his rapid and, as it turned

out, fatal march. Lulled to sleep by the promises made them, the Johannesburgers never for a moment thought their would-be deliverers were themselves in peril. Had they thought so, then I fully believe they would have done all they could to have saved him. Knowing the true character of the gentle Boer, Dr. Jameson was probably under the impression when he received the message that the Johannesburgers had already been attacked, and came hot haste to prevent further spilling of blood, and to avenge the blood already spilled. If he had but waited until the Boers surrounding Johannesburg had commenced hostilities against the Uitlanders who were claiming their just rights, then he would have been perfectly justified in marching over the border, not with merely five hundred men, but with the full force of the Chartered Company. No man in his position could have remained inactive under such circumstances; the cries of his countrymen could not have gone out to him unheeded. It would have been his duty to have gone to their assistance—say what the long-haired sentimentalists may to the contrary.

But as it was, his raid was a mistake, a terrible mistake. A week later, and his march to Johannes-

burg would have been rendered imperative by circumstances. The Uitlanders, tired of waiting upon Kruger's promises, had determined to make a final stand for their rights, whilst the wily Oom Paul, having made all his preparations, was waiting for the moment when the neck of the tortoise was sufficiently extended to strike.

But Jameson was lured over the frontier, and he fell into the trap so cunningly set for him. Some one betrayed him, or some one grievously blundered—which was it? All is fair in love and war, we are told, and Oom Paul has some reason for congratulating himself upon his success. But he will not own up to the cunning which has brought about his success. Instead he assumes the martyr attitude, and turning up his eyes, calls heaven to witness that this wicked attack upon the "Christian form" of government of which he is the head took him and his altogether by surprise. Now it has been conclusively proved that the Boer Government was fully acquainted long beforehand with every detail of the Uitlander movement, and were prepared accordingly. Why, then, this hypocrisy? But the Boers were ever thus. Hypocrisy with them is a virtue—a virtue that has a marketable value. As a friend of the Boers in

the course of a column of praise of them has recently admitted—"He" (the Boer) "is pious, but will rise from his devotions with emotion to over-reach a stranger in a bargain." The same writer, in referring to the Boer's treatment of animals, also tells us how he, "after a pleasant little contest of rival whips," has seen "the bellies of the mules dropping blood." This fact has forced him to the conclusion that the pious Boer "to animals is not kind."

Kind! What is the gentle Boer really kind to? He beats the Kaffir servant just as he beats the animal, until he drops blood, and there is no one to say him nay. Think of this, my worthy friends, you who cannot find words sufficiently censorious to apply to your own kinsmen in South Africa, yet find the Boer a paragon of all the virtues. Do you not loudly proclaim that he is "peaceful, domestic, sober, pious, faithful, patriotic, and brave"? But you don't know him as he really is, you simply mouth what you have been told, and what you wish to believe. If the Boer had been all that you so fondly picture him, there would have been no cause for the grievances of your own countrymen who have gone to the Transvaal with the object of making their homes there. If the

Boer had been tolerant to those who came to live with him, and had allowed him anything like equal rights to those which he himself possesses, there would have been no crisis to have shaken all South Africa to its very foundations, as well as nearly causing a European war.

And you worthy folk who so strongly condemn Jameson as a lawless freebooter, have you not a word of censure for your gentle, pious Boers, who are the most out-and-out filibusters this century has seen? What is sauce for the Jameson goose should surely be sauce for the Boer gander. But whilst condemning "Dr. Jim," you are silent about the Boer raids into Natal, Zululand, the Orange Free State, and Stella-land. Two blacks do not make a white, but it is sad to think there are people in England who see only the blackness of their own countrymen's deeds, and are blind to the blackness of the deeds of England's enemies.

Recent events will have given a severe set-back to the hopes of a united South Africa—a united South Africa something after the fashion of the Dominion of Canada. What is possible in Canada with its British and French elements, should be equally possible in South Africa with its British and Dutch elements. As it is, the Dutch have

equal rights with the English in Cape Colony, and why shouldn't the English have equal rights with the Boers in the South African Republic? The future may or may not see a federated South Africa, but what we shall see, and at no late date, will be a change in the political situation in the Transvaal. As Mr. Balfour has said: "It is quite impossible, human nature being what it is, that matters shall ever be satisfactory in the Transvaal as long as the system of government there is founded upon so artificial—I am justified in saying so inequitable—a basis." Matters will never be satisfactory until the vast majority of the population—the Uitlanders—who pay by far the greater proportion of taxes, are allowed to have some voice in the affairs of the country. One is tired of Kruger's promises; the much-needed reforms should no longer be delayed. Without them there can be no hope of stability or permanent prosperity in the South African Republic.

Just a word as to Mr. Rhodes. The indecent haste with which a certain section of the press swallow the Boer assertions that he is the instigator of the raid on the Transvaal is not a pleasant spectacle. Where is that much-vaunted British love of fair-play? There is nothing beyond the

one-sided and possibly lying statements from Pretoria and Bloemfontein to directly connect him with the alleged plot. He should be heard in his own defence before he is judged. I hold no brief for Mr. Cecil Rhodes, but I know him, and I believe in him, and this knowledge of him, and the views he held when I last saw him with respect to the Transvaal, make it difficult for me to think that he can have played so completely into the hands of his enemies. With me the wish may be father to the thought, just as it is father to the thought of those who have already condemned him in advance.

By the time this volume is in the hands of the public, Mr. Rhodes will have arrived in England, and what is to be will be.

There will doubtless be many changes in the political situation after this has gone to press, and to such of my readers who may wish to keep themselves informed as to what is really going on in the Transvaal, I would suggest a reference to *The African Critic*. Mr. Henry Hess, its editor, knows the whole subject from A to Z, and he writes therein not only with authority, but without fear—which says a great deal.

And now my thoughts about South Africa have

run their course. Again I say, I do not ask any one to agree with me. Many, I know, will disagree with me—especially those who have never visited South Africa, and consequently know nothing about the matter—that is inevitable. I have done my best to make South Africa, its people and its politics, better known according to my lights; take my impressions and conclusions for exactly what you think they are worth. One thing, I have set nought down in malice, and have written solely from sheer conviction. Some of the truths this book contains may be offensive, but they are hard, irrefutable truths all the same.

THE END

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